I describe the IMAP protocol commands in TABLE 1. I have issued each of these commands in isolation via a telnet connection to the IMAP server and observed the exact system call activity that it generates (instead of using a client like pine that might issue a set of IMAP commands at a time corresponding to some user action).

IMAP Protocol Summary

TABLE 1	IMAP Command	Args Blank => no args	Return from Server/ Comments	
	Any State			
1	**capability**		gets server capability	
2	**logout**			
3	**noop**		use to check for new mail and to prevent connection timeout	
	Non-Authenticated State			
4	**authenticate**	mechanism	SASL auth	
5	**login**	user/passwd		
	Authenticated State			
6	**append**	mailbox, flags, date, msg size, body	adds message to specific mailbox	
7	**create**	mailbox	new mailbox	
8	**delete**	mailbox	deletes mailbox	
9	**examine**	mailbox	selects in read only mode	
10	**list**	basename , maibox	list of mailbox names	
11	**lsub**	basename , maibox	list of mailboxes user is subscribed	
12	**rename**	oldmailbox, new		
13	**select**	mailbox	so that messages in mailbox can be r/w accessed	
14	**status**	mailbox, item	gets status for mailbox not currently selected. For types of items, see TABLE 2.	
15	**subscribe**	mailbox	to a new mailbox	

TABLE 1	IMAP Command	Args Blank => no args	Return from Server/ Comments	
16	**unsubscribe**	mailbox		
	Selected State			
17	**check**		housekeeping	
18	**close**		removes messages fom currently selected mailbox having a delete flag	
19	**copy**	messageset, mailbox	copies messages to another mail-box from the current	
20	**expunge**			
21	**fetch**	message-set, data-items	data-items are described in TABLE 3	
22	**search**	charset, criteria	returns list of messages, the search criteria is detailed and uses keys for different message parts	
23	**store**	messge, data	set/unset message flags	
24	**uid**	command command-args	uses UID numbers instead of mes-sage sequence numbers	

STATUS Data Items	TABLE 2
Messages	# of messages in mailbox
Recent	messages having recent flag
UIDNext	Next UID to be assigned
UIDValidity	Unique ID of mailbox
Unseen	# of unread messages

FETCH Data Items	TABLE 3
ALL	Flags+Envelope+Interaldate+RFC822.Size
Body	variants exist
Bodystructure	MIME representation
Envelope	parsed representation of RFC envelope
Fast	Flags+Interaldate+RFC822.Size
Flags	flags that are set for the message
Full	Flags+Interaldate+RFC822.Size+Envelope+body
INTERNALDATE	date message was received by IMAP server
RFC822	entire rfc822 message
RFC822.Header, Size, Text	fetches parts of the entire message
UID	message's UID

Some Notes on IMAP

1. **mailbox is a mail folder. The default mailbox is INBOX**
2. **For currently selected mailbox, STATUS command is periodically issued**
3. **Hierarchical mailbox support (logical mailboxes)**
4. **noop is periodically performed to keep connection alive**
5. **Multiple users sharing a mailbox, supports concurrent read/write access**
6. **Attributes are associated with messages and not with the mailbox**