



E-Mail Lists at EI&O: LISTSERV

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This document describes e-mail lists in general, and how they are implemented at EI&O. Included is general information on how to apply to have an e-mail list created, and how to administer and use e-mail list services at EI&O.

Portions of this document were excerpted and adapted from the document "LISTSERV for the Non-technical User" by Eric Thomas, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden. Used with permission.

UF Computing & Networking Services

EI&O Information Services

2046 NE Waldo Rd, Suite 2100

Gainesville Florida 32609

(352) 392.2061

<editor@cns.ufl.edu>

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What is an E-Mail List?

In the world of hand-delivered mail, a "mailing list" is often a targeted group of people, identified by names and addresses. Such lists are purchased (for example) from magazine publishers to identify an audience with common interests. The lists are used by private or commercial interests to address catalogs, announcements, or, all too often, what many recipients consider junk mail.

In the electronic-mail-world context, "mailing lists" are also used to send a message to many of us at once. However, since we join mailing lists voluntarily, we usually share a common interest in the subject of the messages we get, and there's a good chance we'll find some of them quite interesting. And--unlike the first kind of mailing list--we can usually join and leave the list as we see fit. Furthermore, we can send our own messages to the mailing list. In fact, electronic mailing lists are more like clubs or magazines than a "real world" mailing list.

This document explains how an electronic mailing list is operated, and how you can set up and operate one at EI&O using our LISTSERV service.

A mailing list is managed by a list owner (or sometimes several owners for large lists). The list owner is the person with formal responsibility for the operation of the list: a referee, if you will. The list owner defines the list's charter and policies, i.e., what the list is about and what are the general rules all subscribers must accept in order to be allowed to join the list (don't worry; usually these rules are pretty lax). The owner is also responsible for all administrative matters and for answering questions from the list subscribers. It is not unusual to have several list owners spreading the work and responsibility among themselves; in particular, it is common for a "technical" list owner to assist the nontechnical person who is formally in charge of the list with administrative matters.

Messages sent, or "posted," to a mailing list are usually saved in the list archives for future reference, although this function can be disabled to save disk space. Other expressions you may encounter are list notebooks and list logs; they all mean the same thing to people from different computer cultures. These archives are usually organized in monthly log files, although high-volume lists may use weekly files and some lists use more sophisticated arrangements. A log file is just a disk file containing everything that was said on the list in a given month (or week). There are two ways to access these list archives. You can ask LISTSERV to send you (for example) the log file for March 1999. Alternatively, you can use the database functions to search the archives for messages related to a particular topic, or sent by a certain person, and have LISTSERV return a copy of the messages that matched your search criteria. The database functions take some time getting used to, because when you are searching an archive with 5,000 messages it can be difficult to select the messages you are looking for without also selecting another 200 unrelated messages. But, once you get past that obstacle, they are invaluable.

How to Set Up and Manage A LISTSERV E-mail List at EI&O

As a service to our customers, EI&O does not charge for running a LISTSERV list; however, there is a charge for maintaining an archive.

The topics of e-mail lists at EI&O must be directly related to the instruction, research, or administrative mission of Florida's State University System.

1. Submit the request for your new list using a Web browser at lists.ufl.edu [<http://lists.ufl.edu/>]

The following are the fields which must be completed to create your new list. You will find it helpful to read over this list completely first, and then read over it again, writing down your answers to each entry, so that you will be prepared when you actually begin completing the on-line form.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Listname: | Give your list a name that is brief, but meaningful and reflects its purpose. The listname may not contain any spaces, but may contain hyphens to separate words (e.g. MY-LIST-L). Note that all list-names are required by policy to have "-L" at the end. This will form part of the e-mail address that people use to communicate with/through the list. For example, a list named MY-LIST-L will have an e-mail address of MY-LIST-L@LISTS.UFL.EDU [http://docweb.cns.ufl.edu/docs/d0099/d0099.html] |
| List Title: | Here you should enter a longer, more descriptive title for the list. This will appear in the message sent to new subscribers to your list, and also in "lists of lists". The List Title will NOT generally appear in regular day-to-day e-mail messages sent through the list. |
| Should the list be publicly advertised? | The available choices are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This list will not be publicly listed in the "list of lists" available to people who issue a query to "Show me all the lists."• This list will only be listed in the "list of lists" on the local (UFL.EDU) LISTSERV• This list will be listed on all LISTSERVs worldwide |
| How can subscriptions be made? | How can people become subscribed to this list? The choices are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By end-users themselves? (Also implies that optional message archives can be accessed by anyone.)• Only by the list owner? (Also implies that optional message archives can be accessed only by subscribers.) |
| How should replies to email be redistributed? | When a message is distributed to the list, and a user selects "Reply:", what do you want the default behavior of the |

Reply to be? The choices are:

- Back to the mailing list
- Only to the person that posted the message

How should mail sent to the list be handled?

When a message is sent to the list, what do you want to happen? The choices are:

- Mail is posted directly to the list (unmoderated)
- All the mail is filtered by an editor (moderated)

If you choose to have mail moderated, please include the editor's full e-mail address in the form `username@somewhere.domain`, or indicate a list of editors by including the full e-mail address of each person and placing a space between each e-mail address.

Moderators:

Do you wish to have automatic archiving of messages sent to your e-mail list? If so, how often do you want the log to be rotated?

You can elect to have a copy of all messages sent through this list saved to archive files for future reference. If you elect to do this, your (the list-owner) userid will be charged at EI&O's normal rates for disk-storage used by your list's archive files.

Also, if you elect to have archives for your list, you must specify how long a time each file should cover. This prevents your list from having a single archive file which would eventually grow to an unmanageable/unuseful size. Each of the choices specifies how long messages should be accumulated in one archive file before starting a new archive file. The choices are:

- No archiving is to be done
- Archive a day's worth of mail
- Archive a month's worth of mail
- Archive a year's worth of mail

that can be fetched via e-mail from LISTSERV?

Besides the archive files (see above), your list can have a collection of files available online, which may be "fetched" by your list members via e-mail request. These might be such things as your organization's charter, your list's working "rules," or even binary files such as spreadsheets or database files.

As with archive files If you elect to do this, your (the list-owner) userid will be charged at EI&O's normal rates for disk-storage used by your list's data files.

Note that *most* lists do *not* maintain, nor need, this sort of data file.

The choices are:

- No, I do not need to supply data files to the server
- Yes, I want to be able to supply own data files

What are the e-mail address(es) for the list owners? Specify one or more fully-qualified e-mail addresses in the form `username@somewhere.domain` or indicate a list of owners by including the full e-mail address of each person and placing a space between each e-mail address.
Important: The person filling out this form must be included as a list owner.

Owners:

Should the list owner(s) be notified when someone subscribes to the list?

This also determines whether or not the listowners receive e-mail notification when a person *leaves* (unsubscribes from) the list. The choices are:

- The list owner(s) do not want to be notified when new subscriptions are made
- The list owner(s) should be notified of all new subscriptions to the list

Enter your name:

Your telephone number:

Enter your fully qualified
email address
(username@somewhere.domain):

Enter your organization
(university and department,
or state agency):

2. Subscribe yourself. Optionally, add the initial subscribers. (This is required for "closed subscription" lists--lists set up to accept new members only when added by the owners. For "open subscription" lists, new users can add themselves, as discussed under item (4), below). To add subscribers, send e-mail to <listserv@lists.ufl.edu [mailto:listserv@lists.ufl.edu]> with the following command(s) as the only text in the body of the message (you can send multiple **ADD** commands per e-mail):
add listname userid@domain firstname lastname

For example, to add a user named "Jean-Luc Picard," whose e-mail address is "picard@starfleet.aca.edu," to a list named "STARTREK," you would send the command:
add startrek picard@starfleet.aca.edu Jean-Luc Picard

3. Below are additional commands related to adding and deleting users:

To delete a subscriber, send e-mail to listserv@lists.ufl.edu [mailto:listserv@lists.ufl.edu] with the following command(s) as the only text in the body of the message (you can send multiple delete commands per e-mail):
delete listname userid@domain

4. For open subscription lists (lists which allow anyone to subscribe themselves), advertise to users that they can subscribe themselves by sending e-mail to listserv@lists.ufl.edu [mailto:listserv@lists.ufl.edu] with the one-line message body:
subscribe listname firstname lastname

For example, if Jean-Luc Picard wished to subscribe himself to the list "STARTREK," he would send the command:
subscribe startrek Jean-Luc Picard

To unsubscribe, use:
unsubscribe listname

Note

when subscribing or unsubscribing, you must be logged on under the same userid as from where you wish to subscribe or unsubscribe.

5. Tell users that they can send e-mail to all subscribers on the list, i.e., "send to the list," by sending e-mail to:
listname@lists.ufl.edu

where listname is the name of your particular list. For example:
startrek@lists.ufl.edu

Additional information for list owners is available in the Web document:
<http://www.lsoft.com/manuals/index.html> [<http://www.lsoft.com/manuals/index.html>]

Other Useful Commands

In addition to the "ADD" and "DELETE" commands described above, the following commands may be issued by sending a message to listserv@lists.ufl.edu, with the command(s) in the body of the message. Each command must be on a line by itself, but multiple commands may be included in a single message. (The "Subject:" header of the e-mail is ignored.)

To have a copy of the list sent to you, use the command: **review listname**

To be sent more information on using LISTSERV, issue the command: **info genintro**

To be sent info on managing LISTSERV lists, issue the commands: **info owners**
 info keywords

Changing Your List's Basic Configuration

Requests for changes of list ownership, deleting your list, etc., should be sent in an e-mail to EI&O's LISTSERV managers at list-master@lists.ufl.edu [<mailto:list-master@lists.ufl.edu>].

Your Comments are Welcome

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this and all EI&O documentation. Please send your comments to:

UF Computing & Networking Services

EI&O Information Services

2046 NE Waldo Rd, Suite 2100

Gainesville Florida 32609
(352) 392.2061
<editor@cns.ufl.edu>