








Working with Mailing Lists

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Topics

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-  Terminology
-  Commands
-  Setting Up a List
-  Administering a List
-  List Etiquette
-  Summary

Overview of Mailing Lists

- Facilitate communication with many people just like paper mail, meetings, conference calls, newsletters.
- Automate the task for efficiency and a more attractive presentation.
- Automation (communication with a computer) requires simplicity and consistency.

Basic Terminology

- 📄 `user@ucsd.edu` is your campus-wide email address
- 📄 `post` - to send an email to a list
- 📄 `command` - request for the list server to do something
- 📄 `syntax` - the way a command is formatted
- 📄 `administrator` - person who sets up and/or coordinates the list

What is a List Server?

- ☞ List server: Hardware and software that processes requests and handles mail delivery.
- ☞ LISTSERV® is a specific software which UCSD does not use; we have our own home-grown program.
- ☞ The list of subscribers to a particular list is a “mailing list”.

Types of Mailing Lists

- Discussion -- typically not moderated, meaning anyone can “post” (send) email and reply to posts.
- Announcement -- typically moderated, meaning someone is responsible for screening all material and only they can “post” (send); recipients cannot “reply”.

Official Campus Mailing Lists

📄 messages need VC approval which can be requested by sending email to adminrec@ucsd.edu

Examples:

- all-at-ucsd -- goes to entire campus; all ucsd employee addresses automatically receive
- ucsd-flyers, ucsd-notices -- used for special announcements; subscribers need to sign up
- all-academic, academic-flyers, clinfac -- examples of special group lists; subscription can be automatic or manual

Command Basics

☞ List of commands available on the Net Ops web site at

<http://www-no.ucsd.edu/mail/info.html>

☞ Syntax counts

☞ Less isn't always more

☞ Repeatedly sending the same command won't get you a different result.

How to Send Commands

- 📄 Address your email to `listserv@ucsd.edu`
- 📄 Leave the subject line blank
- 📄 You can put up to 20 commands but each must be on a separate line
- 📄 Commands in a single email need not be related to the same mailing list or the same email address

Frequently Used Commands

📄 **Subscribe, sub or add** needs address and list name

– `sub rzenon@ucsd.edu listname`

📄 **unsubscribe, unsub or delete** needs address and list name

– `delete imarker@ucsd.edu listname`

Commands (cont'd)

list and list-all

- `list [email address]` gives list of all mailing lists to which address is subscribed
- `list-all gc-chairs` gives list of all addresses subscribed to the gc-chairs list (only authorized users can do)

faq

- `faq listname` returns the file of Frequently Asked Questions for that list, if one exists
- `faq` with no list name returns a list of which mailing lists have faq's

Commands (cont'd)

📄 **index** - returns a list of all the mailing lists to which the sending address can subscribe

📄 **longindex** - response same as above but also includes a description of each list

📄 **help** - returns the master listserver help file, including list of commands; or if you add list name after, gives help file for that list

Talking to the UCSD List Server

- ☞ Handles up to 20 commands per message; put each on a separate line
- ☞ You will get a confirmation back for each command; if you had multiple commands in a single email, confirmations will come separately.
- ☞ Save the email you receive when you subscribe to a list; it has valuable information!

Sending Mail to a List

- ☞ If it is an unmoderated list, send mail to listname@ucsd.edu; recipients will see that it came from you, and can either respond to you privately, or to the list.
- ☞ If it is a moderated list, send to listname@ucsd.edu and if approved, moderator will post to the distribution list.
- ☞ Mail to lists gets lower priority than user-to-user mail, so there might be a delay in its distribution.

Syntax Effects

📄 Spaces, dashes, even formatting can alter the response.

Which is correct?

↓ add imarker gc-chairs@ucsd.edu

↓ add imarker@ucsd gc-chairs

↓ add gc-chairs

↓ add imarker@ucsd.edu gc-chairs@ucsd.edu

↓ add imarker@ucsd.edu gc-chairs

Less Isn't Always More

`list imarker@ucsd.edu`

returns the same as

`list` (if the request is sent from `imarker@ucsd.edu`)

`FAQ gc-chairs`

does not return same as

`FAQ`

Error Messages

📄 If the **HELP** file comes back to you, the list server didn't understand your request because your syntax was incorrect. Check the commands list and try again.

📄 “You can't be found on this mailing list” means you're subscribed with a different email address, or you're on a subsidiary list

Error Messages (cont'd)

- 📄 “The mailing list cannot be found” means you don’t have the right name of the list, you used the email address of the list instead of its name, or you tried to subscribe an off-campus address to a UCSD-only list.
- 📄 If you still can’t figure it out, email postmistress@ucsd.edu; include both the error message you got and the command you tried to execute.

Setting Up a New List

 Requesting a list

 Setting up the right list parameters

 Building the subscription list

 Welcome messages

Requesting a New List

📄 Complete online request form at:

<https://www-no.ucsd.edu/secure-bin/listserver/login.pl>

📄 No requests are processed on the weekend, including Friday; requests must be in by 4:00 p.m. Thursday.

📄 You will receive confirmation that the form was received and when the setup is completed.

Which Parameters Are Right?

Success will depend on how well you think out the options before you create the list, such as:

- moderated?
- self-subscribable?
- public, private, or UCSD?


Building a Subscription List

- 📄 You can copy and paste addresses from other sources, but make sure to include the full address (with @xxx.xxx) or you won't be able to unsubscribe them later
- 📄 Include all the required people when you create the list but use discretion with optional subscribers until you get a sense of the list's personality.
- 📄 Be sure to subscribe yourself!!!!

Welcome Messages

- 📄 Give subscribers an idea of what the list is to be used for.
- 📄 Set the tone of the communication.
- 📄 Include the name and contact of the administrator(s).
- 📄 Remember that for on-going lists the message will be received every time someone new subscribes.

Administering a List

 Know your audience

 Keeping the subscription list updated

 When it's time for a new list

Know Your Audience

- ☞ Did your subscribers choose to be on list?
- ☞ Is the list job-critical or related to an interest?
- ☞ What's the pervading tone of communication?
- ☞ Will anything but “just the facts” be appreciated?
- ☞ Is humor appropriate?

Subscription List Updating

- 📄 Incorporate updating into your routine; you can do changes to multiple lists in one email.
- 📄 Do an annual housecleaning.
- 📄 Coordinate among the list's administrators.
- 📄 A mailing list loses its effectiveness if its subscription list is not current.

When It's Time for a New List

- 📄 Is there much traffic that consistently applies to a subset of the list?
- 📄 Are posts creating confusion among those to whom they don't apply?
- 📄 Is more than one theme to the discussions becoming apparent?
- 📄 Is there a serious gap in sub-groups' levels of sophistication and/or interest?

Summary of Key Points

- 📄 Mailing lists save time and are very useful.
- 📄 Planning at the start of a list makes its maintenance much easier.
- 📄 The listserver is picky -- be careful with your syntax!
- 📄 Someone should be the list expert, and it should be easy to reach that person.
- 📄 There are resources to help you!!!