

About the Internet: Using Mailing Lists

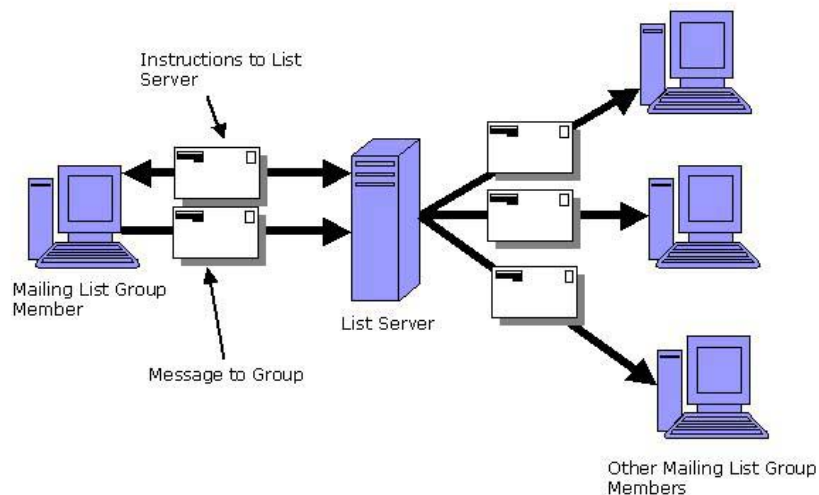
What is a mailing list?

Like a newsgroup, a mailing list is made up of a group of people who share a common interest. Unlike a newsgroup, you don't have to go to a Web site or use a newsreader to read the messages that the other people in the group have written. All of the communication is done using e-mail.

Using a mailing list is like subscribing to a newspaper. After you have subscribed, the news gets sent to you every day. Like newsgroups, there are mailing lists for thousands of topics.

How a mailing list works

A mailing list is maintained by a list server, a computer that is running special mailing list software. The list server manages an e-mail address that the members of a group use when they want to send a message to all the other members of the group. When a member of a group sends a message to the group, the list server automatically e-mails the message to all of the other members of the group. In order to participate in a mailing list, you have to subscribe to a group. This is done by sending an e-mail to the list server with a message that you want to subscribe. The list server then sends back a message confirming your subscription. After that, you can send messages to the group and receive messages from the group through your e-mail program.



How to find a mailing list

LISTSERV is one of the most popular software programs for list servers. To search by topic for mailing lists that use this program, follow this procedure:

1. Address a new e-mail to listserv@listserv.net.
2. Leave the subject line blank.
3. In the body of the message, type: "list global/my topic " but substitute a topic of interest to you in place of "my topic."
4. Click Send button.

You will be sent an e-mail that lists all of the mailing lists that are about that topic.

You can also go to <http://www.lsoft.com/lists/listref.html> and search the LISTSERV database of mailing lists online.

Subscribing to a mailing list

To subscribe to a mailing list, follow this procedure:

1. Address a new e-mail to the list server that is managing the mailing list you want to join.
2. Leave the subject line blank.
3. In the body of the message, type: "SUBSCRIBE list name" but substitute the name of the mailing list you want to join for "list name."
4. Click Send button.

After you subscribe, you will receive an introduction e-mail message welcoming you to the list, instructing you how to post messages to the list, and how to unsubscribe from the list. This information is very important because you may wish to unsubscribe from the list in the future.

Note: Mailing lists use two addresses:

1. The command address. This is the address to which you send messages to the list server to subscribe and unsubscribe to a list.
2. The mailing list address. This is the address to which you send messages to be read by other list members.

The list server introduction e-mail will explain when to use these two addresses.
