Belonging to a Listar Mailing List

Listar is an electronic mailing list program that distributes electronic mail to everyone on a list. The mailing list is owned and managed by one person and, depending on how the list was set up, members of the list may be able to post to the list or unsubscribe from the list without the intervention of the owner or computer administrators. Listar distributes e-mail, handles routine subscription requests, and provides basic information about the list on request.

This document contains instructions for users who want to subscribe to an existing list or for users who already belong to a list and want to send a message to the list or carry out some administrative task. If you are interested in creating and managing a list, please refer to SSCC Publication #1-2, Administering a Listar Mailing List.

Subscribing to and Unsubscribing from a List

SSCC members may subscribe to Listar lists by following the instructions given below. No one may subscribe another person to a mailing list unless they are the list owner for the list. Note, that by default, all SSCC Listar mailing lists are closed. This means that the owner of the list must approve all subscription requests.

Follow the steps below to make a subscription request:

1. Invoke a mailer and specify the command to compose a new message.

2. On the "To:" line of the mail header, type listar@ssc.wisc.edu.

3. Leave the subject line blank.

4. In the body of the message, type the following three lines:

   //job
   subscribe listname
   //eoj

   where listname is the name of the list you want to subscribe to. Note that you can include more than one command in a single message. Each command should go on a separate line and the message must begin with //job and end with //eoj.

5. Send the message.

You will then be sent a message acknowledging your request. For open lists, you will be subscribed immediately. For closed lists, the list owner must first approve your subscription request before you will be added to the list.

If later you want to unsubscribe from the list, substitute the command unsubscribe for
the command subscribe in step four above.

Sending Mail to be Distributed to a List

If you are a member of a list and wish to send mail to be distributed through the mailing list, simply send the mail you want to be distributed to listname, substituting the name of the list for listname. By default, SSCC Listar mailing lists are set up so that any member of the list may “post” to it. Mail sent to the list will be redistributed automatically to the list of subscribers. Some list owners have reconfigured their lists so that they must authorize messages sent to the list before they get posted.

Listar Commands

There are a number of other commands that you can give Listar. It is important that all commands to Listar be phrased and spelled exactly the way they are given here. Because Listar is a computer program, it is very literal-minded and can only understand commands which exactly match the ones it was taught.

Following is a list of the things you can tell Listar to do:

which – asks Listar to send you a message containing all the lists you are subscribed to

who [list-name] – asks Listar to send you a message containing who the members are for the specified list.

help – requests the help file. Listar will reply with a copy of the help file.

lists – asks Listar to send you a message containing all the lists available on the server.

commands – requests a list of all Listar’s commands. Listar will send a list of available commands, along with a brief explanation and correct syntax.

vacation [list-name] [duration] – asks Listar to put you on “vacation” status for the list name specified. You will remain a list member, but will not receive list mail for the specified duration (in days).

setaddy [new-email-address] – asks Listar to change your email address for the list to the one specified in the command. Note that your list owner may have set up the list so that he or she has to approve the change before it takes place.

unsubscribe [list-name] [list-user] – asks Listar to remove you from the specified list. Listar may remove you or send the request to the list owner for approval, and will reply with a confirmation message. Alternative commands that can be used instead of unsubscribe are leave, remove, signoff, and del.

subscribe [list-name] [list-user] – asks Listar to add you to the specified list. Listar may add you or send the request to the list owner for approval, and will reply with a
confirmation message. Alternative commands that can be used instead of subscribe are join, add, and subscription.

You send Listar these commands by sending mail to listar, leaving the subject line blank, and including the following text in each message:

//job
command
//eoj

Note that you can include more than one command in a single message. Each command should go on a separate line and the message must begin with //job and end with //eoj.

Not all of these commands are necessarily usable for any given list; the list owner can turn these commands off. The command which most often gets turned off is "subscribe;" the list owner can tell Listar to forward subscription requests to the list owner for approval. Similarly, Listar can be told not to give out information about the list without approval from the list owner, or not to resend the mail sent to listname to the subscribers without the owner's approval. If Listar can understand a request but has been told not to obey it without approval from the list owner, Listar will forward the request to the list owner; the owner can then approve or deny the request.