ListServ

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What is a ListServ?

A ListServ is an electronic mailing list service. You can participate in online discussions by sending and receiving e-mail messages to a ListServ mailing list. A ListServ is similar to a newsgroup or online bulletin board service except that, when you subscribe to a mailing list, a copy of every e-mail message sent to the list shows up in your Inbox.

ListServ should not be confused with LISTSERV (spelled with all capital letters). ListServ is a generic term, while LISTSERV is a commercial mailing list product marketed by L-Soft International. There are thousands of different ListServ discussion groups covering a wide range of topics.

At RIT, the ListProc mailing list management software handles ListServ mailing list services. With ListProc you can participate in e-mail discussion groups, search the archives of various lists, create new lists, and manage lists that you own. The ListProc web site at http://www.listproc.net/ has more information. To get a list of all the ListProc discussions hosted at RIT, see the “Getting a listing of all the discussions available to you” section of this document.

How do I get help?

For general computer help, including help with ListServ and e-mail at RIT, contact the ITS HelpDesk or consult the ITS HelpDesk documents. The documents are located in the bins across from the HelpDesk, and from the web page: http://www.rit.edu/ITS/help/help_documents.html. For information on contacting the HelpDesk see the last page of this document.

Why use a ListServ?

By joining a ListServ discussion group you can communicate with scholars, students, and professionals from around the world on a particular topic. ListServ discussions can be interesting and productive, time consuming and dull, or anywhere in between, so choose your lists carefully.

It is helpful to know if a discussion is moderated or not. A moderated discussion is one in which all messages are reviewed by a list owner before they are posted to the members of the group. In this way the list owner can keep the discussion on track and reduce unwanted e-mail traffic. When you subscribe to a list you should receive a message that tells you if the list is moderated.

Note: RIT has a mail quota for all users; it is important for you to check your mail often and delete unwanted messages to avoid exceeding your allowed quota.

How do I use a ListServ?

Generally speaking, you can access and manage any ListServ mailing list by composing and sending e-mail messages addressed to the mailing list. Information &
Technology Services (ITS) recommends that you use an e-mail client program such as RIT Webmail, Netscape Messenger, Outlook, or Outlook Express for Macintosh. Or you can use a text-based e-mail program such as PMDF mail (available when you telnet to RIT’s OpenVMS system) or Pine (available when you telnet to RIT’s OSF cluster).

For more information about e-mail, telnet, or computing resources at RIT, consult the ITS HelpDesk documents mentioned previously in the “How do I get help?” section of this document.

How do I use ListProc?

The sections below tell list subscribers and list owners how to get started using ListProc at RIT. You must have a valid RIT e-mail account in order to send and receive ListProc commands. Additional information for ListProc subscribers, list owners, and site managers is available from the ListProc documentation web page located at http://www.listproc.net/docs/.

Participating in a ListProc mailing list discussion

The following sections describe a few of the basic ListProc commands for list subscribers. You can also access a brief summary of ListProc commands for list subscribers on the ListProc Web site at http://www.listproc.net/docs/usercard.html. For a complete description of the ListProc user commands, consult the ListProcessor User Manual at http://www.listproc.net/ftp/listproc/userman.rtf.

Subscribing to a mailing list

To participate in a ListServ discussion, you must “subscribe” to the mailing list for that discussion. This is a two-step process. To subscribe to a ListProc mailing list, send a message from your e-mail program using the procedure shown below. After you send the message, you must reply to the e-mail message you receive from ListProc to confirm your membership in the list. ListProc uses the return address of your message to begin sending you copies of all future messages posted to the specified discussion group.

1. Start your e-mail program and open a new message.

2. Type the address of the ListProc server e.g. (listserver@listserver.rit.edu) in the “To” field.

3. In the body of the message, type the word sub (short for subscribe), the list name, and your name.

4. Send the message.

Note: The ListProc server does not read the subject field of your message. Feel free to use the subject field to type in a description for your message any time you send mail to the ListProc server.
If Jane Doe wanted to subscribe to the calendar discussion list, she could access her e-mail account with RIT Webmail and compose a message using the subscribe procedure (see example below).

After receiving a confirmation message like the one shown below, Jane would need to reply to the message in order to be included as a member of the discussion list.
**Unsubscribing to a discussion**

To end participation or “unsubscribe” from a ListServ discussion, use the following procedure:

1. Start your e-mail program, open a new message, and type the address of the ListProc server in the “To” field.
2. In the body of the message, type the word `uns` (short for of unsubscribe), the list name, and your name.
3. Send the message.

**Suspending participation in a discussion**

To take a break from participating in a ListServ discussion, use the following procedure:

1. Start your e-mail program, open a new message, and type the address of the ListProc server in the “To” field.
2. In the body of the message, type the word `set`, the list name, and the words `mail postpone`.
3. Send the message.

If Jane Doe wanted to suspend her participation in the `<calendar@listserv.rit.edu>` list, she should compose a new message with the following information:

```
set calendar mail postpone
```

**Resuming participation in a discussion**

To re-activate a suspended ListServ discussion, use the following procedure:

1. Start your e-mail program, open a new message, and type the address of the ListProc server in the “To” field.
2. In the body of the message, type the word `set`, the list name, and the word `mail`.
3. Send the message.
Getting a listing of all the discussions available to you

Follow this procedure to get a copy of a file that lists all "visible" lists known to the local ListProc server.

1. Start your e-mail program, open a new message, and type the address of the ListProc server in the “To” field.
2. In the body of the message, type lists.
3. Send the message.

Posting a message to a discussion

To post a message to a discussion, use the following procedure:

Note: Only messages that are relevant to the discussion should be sent to the ListServ address.

1. Start your e-mail program and open a new message.
2. Type the address of the ListProc mailing list in the “To” field.
3. Type a subject for the message.
4. Type the body of the message you wish to send to the group.
5. Send the message.

Here is an example of a message that Jane Doe might send to the “calendar” discussion:

I am a freshman at RIT looking for information on the calendar system used at RIT. If anyone involved in this discussion has information on this matter, please respond. Or if you feel that others on this list would not be interested in your response, please reply directly to me.

Thank You,
Jane Doe

Note: Keep in mind that your message is posted to an entire discussion group. Remember to express your opinions in a manner that is constructive and inoffensive. If you don’t, you risk being “flamed” (receiving angry e-mail) from members of the group.
Starting your own mailing list discussion with ListProc

The following sections describe the procedure for becoming a list owner, and a few of the basic ListProc commands list owners need to use. As with list subscribers, list owners communicate with the list server by sending and receiving e-mail messages. In this way, list owners manage their list from a remote location.

List owners can access a brief summary of ListProc commands for list owners on the ListProc Web site at http://www.listproc.net/docs/ownercard.html. All ListProc list owners should thoroughly review this document and the “ListProcessor List-Owner Manual.” The List-Owner manual is available at http://www.listproc.net/ftp/listproc/ownerman.rtf, or you can ask for a printout of the document at the ITS HelpDesk (see contact information at the end of this document).

Filling out a request form

If you are an RIT faculty, staff, or student who would like to start a mailing list discussion, you can fill out a “Mailing List (ListServ) Request Form” and send it to, or drop it off at the ITS HelpDesk. You can get the form from the ITS HelpDesk or from the http://www.rit.edu/ITS/help/forms/listserv-form.pdf page. A qualified faculty or staff person who will serve as the moderator or owner of the list must sponsor all requests.

If you prefer, you can send an e-mail message to helpdesk@rit.edu instead of using the request form. If you chose this option, make sure your e-mail message contains the following information:

- The name of the mailing list
- The primary subject of the discussion
- The estimated number of participants
- The name of the person sponsoring the list (the mailing list manager)
- Department name
- Phone number of contact person
- Sponsor’s username

If ITS approves your request, you will receive an e-mail message informing you of the password for the mailing list discussion. The e-mail address that subscribers can send messages to is:

    name@listserv.rit.edu

where “name” is the name of the mailing list that you provided on the request form. After the system administrator sets up your list, you need to create “Welcome” and “Info” files, and configure your list.
Creating “Welcome” and “Info” files

The “Welcome” file is automatically sent out to all new subscribers to your list. It should tell what the list is about, give instructions on how to get in touch with list owners and moderators, and specify the rules and regulations for the list.

The “Info” file is sent out to anyone requesting information from ListProc about your list. It should offer a brief description of the list, including membership restrictions, to help users decide if they want to subscribe to your list. Use the “Edit” command to obtain a copy of the Welcome and Info files, and use the “Put” command to replace them after you are done editing them.

Here is an example of the procedure for obtaining a copy of your Welcome file:

1. Start your e-mail program, open a new message, and type the address of the ListProc server (listserver@listserver.rit.edu) in the “To” field.

2. In the body of the message, type, edit listname password welcome (replace the word listname with the actual name of your list, and the word password with the actual password for the list).

3. Send the message.

4. Once you obtain a copy of a configuration file for your list, such as the “Welcome” file, you can edit it with a text editor program. After you edit the file you can send a replacement copy to the ListProc server using the “Put” command.

Here is an example of the procedure you can use to replace the “Welcome” file after you edit it:

- Start your e-mail program, open a new message, and type the address of the ListProc server (listserver@listserver.rit.edu) in the “To” field.

- In the body of the message, type, put listname password welcome (replacing the word listname with the actual name of your list, and the word password with the actual password for the list).

- Send the message.
Note: *The ListProc server does not read the subject field of your message. Feel free to use the subject field to type in a description for your message any time you send mail to the ListProc server.*

**Adding a subscriber to your list**

Individual users can automatically subscribe to a list by using the subscribe procedure described earlier. However, list owners can use the following method to add subscribers to the list as well:

1. Start your e-mail program, open a new message, and type the address of the ListProc server (listserver@listserver.rit.edu) in the “To” field.

2. In the body of the message, type the word **add**, the name of the list, the password for the list, and the e-mail address of the person you are adding to the list. This is the ONLY email address the subscriber can use to send email to the list from.

3. Send the message.

**Deleting a subscriber from your list**

1. Start your e-mail program, open a new message, and type the address of the ListProc server (listserver@listserver.rit.edu) in the “To” field.

2. In the body of the message, type the word **delete**, the name of the list, the password for the list, and the e-mail address of the person you are removing from the list.

3. Send the message.

**Reviewing a list of subscribers in a discussion**

To see a list of subscribers to a ListProc discussion, use the following procedure:

1. Start your e-mail program, open a new message, and type the address of the ListProc server (listserver@listserver.rit.edu) in the “To” field.

2. In the body of the message, type the word **review**, the name of the list, the password for the list, and the list name.

3. Send the message.
# Configuring your list

Here are some useful commands for configuring ListProc mailing lists (Items in *italics* must be supplied by you):

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<th>Task</th>
<th>Command</th>
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<tr>
<td>Display the list settings</td>
<td>con <code>listname password</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change the list password</td>
<td>con <code>listname password new-password</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open the list so anyone may subscribe</td>
<td>con <code>listname password open-subscriptions</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close the list so only the list manager can add people</td>
<td>con <code>listname password closed-subscriptions</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up the list so that if someone tries to subscribe, the manager gets notified and can approve or disapprove</td>
<td>con <code>listname password owner-subscriptions</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set a maximum number of messages per day, to avoid huge volumes from looping e-mail messages</td>
<td>con <code>listname password message-limit number</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add a list manager</td>
<td>con <code>listname password owners address</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove a list manager</td>
<td>con <code>listname password remove-owners address</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell ListProc that only subscribers may request the subscriber list</td>
<td>con <code>listname password review-by-subscribers</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell ListProc that only subscribers may post messages to the list</td>
<td>con <code>listname password send-by-subscribers</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell ListProc that anyone may post messages to the list</td>
<td>con <code>listname password send-by-all</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delete subscribers automatically when their mail bounces</td>
<td>con <code>listname password auto-delete-subscribers</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To turn this off, send this command: con <code>listname password no-auto-delete-subscribers</code></td>
</tr>
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For more information on RIT Staff and ALL Staff subscriptions, please see the following:

```plaintext
http://inside.rit.edu/lists/
```
Contacting the ITS HelpDesk

Phone Support: (585) 475-HELP or 475-2810 (TTY)
Email: helpdesk@rit.edu
Web Address: https://www.rit.edu/its/help/
In Person: Gannett Building, Room 7B-1113

Contacting the Resnet (Residential Computing) HelpDesk

Phone Support: (585) 475-2600 or 475-4927 (TTY)
Email: resnet@rit.edu
Web Address: https://www.rit.edu/its/services/resnet/
In Person: Nathaniel Rochester Hall (Building 43), Room 1034

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