

Introduction

Many SEAS mailing lists are now managed via *SmartList* software. We have had this package for a number of years, and have used it for a few lists during that time. However, with the increase in SPAM and other mail list abuses, we've begun to convert most of our lists to lists managed via SmartList. SmartList is like several other mailing list management programs (*MailMan*, *MajorDomo*) in that it offers a great deal of control and protection for lists, and allows individuals other than system administrators to easily manage mailing lists.

SmartList Configuration Items

There are several features that need to be configured when setting up a SmartList managed mailing list. Most of these features can be altered later, but it is still a good idea to get it right from the beginning.

1. Open or closed list? Who should be able to post messages to the list? We can set up the list so that only a specific list of people may post, so that only list members may post, or so that anyone may post (I think the latter is possible; we haven't yet tried it with a managed list). The first method is appropriate for lists intended to disseminate information to a group (e.g., a departmental mailing list, a course mailing list). The second method is appropriate for a forum/discussion type of list (e.g., a lab group mailing list or student organization list).
2. Subscription method – should the list manager be the only one able to add members, should anyone be able to send a request that is automatically honored, or should an attempt to post a message result in the individual being added to the list? Typically for our school/departmental/lab lists, we want subscriptions to be kept within the organization, and appropriate for the list, so the first method is all we use. The other methods debilitate the list management software's ability to protect the list (and SEAS resources).
3. Unsubscription method – those available are similar to subscription methods one and two. Generally, for departmental or other “required” or “semi-required” lists, we recommend that the list manager need execute any unsubscription. But for “voluntary” lists, it should be possible for an individual to send an “unsubscribe” request to the list management address and have it automatically processed. The list manager does get notified via email that a person has dropped from the list.
4. List messages must be edited/tailored to reflect the list. There are messages about retrieving archived list messages, subscription messages, and unsubscription messages.

List Management

SmartList managed lists are controlled easily via emailed commands sent by the list manager. The list manager needs to be able to create mail messages with arbitrary mail headers – something that most mail clients no longer allow (their goal is to hide all that machinery from you). To make your life a bit easier, we've created a small program that will correctly generate the control/command messages for you. This program is '*listmgr*'. To use listmgr, you need the simple skills of (1) being able to login to a SEAS

UNIX host in your department, and (2) running a simple command with some options. Of course you need to be able to logout as well, but that's assumed if you can login. Listmgr is used as follows:

```
Usage: listmgr [-V] [-help] [-v] [-a action] [-f file] -m addr [addr]
      -V      display version information and quit.
      -help   display this help screen and quit.
      -v      pass 'verbose' flag to mailer.
      -f file  file containing mail addresses for this action.
      -m addr  list-address for requests (REQUIRED!)
      -a act   action to be taken, must be one of:
              subscribe,unsubscribe,help,info,showlog,wipelog,
              checkdist, or showdist.
      addr    one or more email addresses for this action.
```

Typically, you will be subscribing (adding) or unsubscribing (deleting) addresses from the list(s) you manage. Assume you are managing a list named 'foobar'. To add the address *mickey.dolenz@ece.rochester.edu* to the list, you would issue the command

```
listmgr -m foobar -a subscribe mickey.dolenz@ece.rochester.edu
```

Mickey would receive a message from the list server notifying him that he had been added to the list, and would also provide him with some information about the list (and how to unsubscribe).

To unsubscribe Peter Tork from that list, you would need to know what address had been used to subscribe Peter. You can request that via

```
listmgr -m foobar -a showdist
```

and the list will mail you a copy of the list membership addresses. Assuming Peter's address in the list was *peter.tork@ece.rochester.edu*, you could unsubscribe him as follows:

```
listmgr -m foobar -a unsubscribe peter.tork@ece.rochester.edu
```

Peter would receive an email message letting him know he'd been unsubscribed from the list 'foobar'.

Now it would not be a very useful list if anyone could send commands to the list and have them honored. So *listmgr* will ask you for two pieces of information that are used to authenticate you as the designated list manager. First you will be asked for the list's password. You won't see this as you type it in; if you notice that you can see the password as you are typing, something is wrong – stop immediately!. Do not share this password with anyone. It is not related to your own email/UNIX/Windows passwords. It is assigned when the list is created, and only a system administrator can change it for you (there is no command to change the password). Second, you will be prompted for your list manager identity, i.e., your email address as set as the list manager. You will see this as you type it in.