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## Coming soon.....

- Searching
- E-mail Banners
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- Changing List Titles
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*Welcome to the Spring issue of the JISCmail Newsletter. I hope that issue 6 finds you in good health. The JISCmail team have been busy over the past couple of months producing another facility, this time called 'Discussion Rooms' which has now been added to the JISCmail service. Early feedback of 'Discussions' leads us to believe that this will be a useful forum for impromptu meetings and innovative brainstorming. More on discussions later.*

*We are trying to improve the readership of this newsletter and would like to encourage you as current readers to tell your friends and colleagues. We conducted an online survey to our >4,000 list owners at the end of January and it would appear there is still a large percentage of owners who have not yet read the [newsletter](#). So please do tell.*

*We have been fortunate that colleagues from the JISC family of services have been willing to provide us with articles of interest for our issues. I hope you have found their experiences useful. We would still welcome others using JISCmail regularly to offer us a few lines for future issues. I appreciate time is at a premium these days, but sharing any success when using JISCmail may be beneficial to others time.*

**Penny Windebank, Editor**

## JISC RSC NW and JISCmail by Jonathan Day

Regional Support Centres are at the forefront of building communities of practice and breaking down barriers to collaboration and cooperation by providing help and advice to a range of post-16 learning providers. JISCmail is an essential tool which keeps in touch with hundreds of practitioners on a daily basis, keeping them up to-date with "e-learning" developments and facilitating the sharing of ideas and experiences.

At JISC RSC NW we have made extensive use of the JISCmail service and currently manage 21 lists including 2 super-lists. Super-lists are special lists that bring together a number of other lists into a family. By mailing the super-list each individual list receives the mailing, but prevents users getting multiple copies if they are subscribed to more than one list.

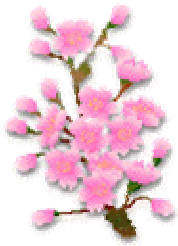
We also wanted to make more use of web based management pages to allow users to view the archives and to join or leave a list. Applying templates to each of the management pages has enabled us to customise these pages and integrate them into our website with the same look and feel. This approach has been very successful and has given our users much more control over their membership of the RSC lists.

The key challenge for us is to get more participation from the users. There have been cases of sporadic discussion, but the next step for us will be to help users develop confidence in using the lists for collaboration. Over the coming months we will be discussing these issues with colleagues from other RSCs to find a pragmatic way of achieving this given the numbers involved.

Jonathan Day  
JISC RSC NW Manager

# Virtual Discussion Rooms by Penny Windebank

In early March the JISCmail team announced a new facility called 'Discussion Rooms'. Adding this facility to the existing JISCmail portal provides each list with its own separate Discussion Room.



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Each Discussion Room is a *virtual* meeting room where 2 or more list members can conduct a text-based discussion in real-time. Providing you are a list member/owner of the list you can join or start a discussion at anytime. When you enter the room your name is shown in the Participants list to the right of the page and you will be able to see who else is in the room with you.

When you wish to say something type it in the box at the bottom of the page, to the left of the Send button, and click on Send. Your text will appear in the message area above and will be associated with your name. You can go into the Discussion Room at any time, so you may wish to choose a quiet moment and experiment with some of the other features. You can change the colour of your messages so that you might more easily distinguish between your messages and those of other list members. You may wish to explore the range of smiles and other images to customise your appearance during a discussion. And when you have finished remember to logout. The logout button can be found at the base of the window last in the line of icons. If you wish to record your discussion then remember to click on the blue save session.

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## Tips for Owners - Templates by Les Cesek

When your list is first created, certain attributes such as the appearance of its web pages and the content of the standard messages sent out when subscribers join or leave a list, are perfectly acceptable and no additional customisation is required. However, our system does provide a large set of standard templates and a rich set of customisation features which mean that list owners themselves can enhance these to present a much more personalised feel to their list.

Even though there are a large number of templates which can be customised, by just customising a few, it's possible to make your list stand out and really convey information about its purpose and character. One common customisation is the list homepage WWW\_INDEX. You can change the colours in the list home page to be the same as your organisation, you can also add logos, other images and relevant URLs to your own or related organisations. And by providing links back to your list from your own web site it's possible to fully integrate your list with your own web site.

By customising the WELCOME template, which determines the message that is sent to new subscribers, you can clearly state your list policy on matters such as acceptable standards of subscriber behaviour, use of attachments and the files area, policies on job or conference adverts and other matters of general list etiquette.

Just by customising these two templates

you can appreciably enhance and personalise your list.

All of our templates can be accessed via the templates button in list management. You will find there are two sets; for the web, and for mail parts of your list (although slightly confusingly, the welcome email template is in the web section). Select a template and press the edit button, and you can then add your customisation. There is no technical coding required, just find the right words for the mail templates, and some basic HTML will be enough for the web templates. Any changes which you make, and then save, take effect straightaway and therefore it's possible to quickly develop a new look perhaps starting with small changes, and then with confidence, you can embark on more sophisticated designs. You could perhaps work with your web designers to share colour and layout features with your own web site. This process is quite safe, as it's always possible to delete your customisations and return to the system defaults by just pressing the delete button during editing.

The owner's manual, at

[http://www.lsoft.com/manuals/1.8e/owner/listowners\\_intro.pdf](http://www.lsoft.com/manuals/1.8e/owner/listowners_intro.pdf)

has a whole section on templates and gives full details on what each one does and how to use the various customisation techniques. We also have some experience of template customisation here at the Helpline and we're always happy to advise & assist.

**Template Management** **OWNERS-TALK List**

Subscriber's Corner  
Server Archives  
List Archives

List Management  
List Moderation  
Server Management

Help  
Log off

Customize Home Page  
Customize Layout  
Edit Dynamic Templates  
Edit Static Templates

Select a template to view or edit

Welcome message

Change template

Edit Form

Switch to WWW Templates

WWW or Mail

List of templates

You can narrow the selection presented in the template list above:

Search for a string in template name or description:

Refresh

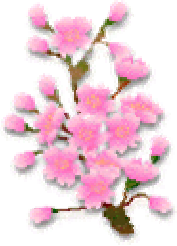
Only display modified templates

Create a new template

New template name:  Create

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## Tips for Owners - Attachments by Pam Delaney

Many users ask if LISTSERV allows attachments to be sent to JISCmail lists. The simple answer is yes and is applicable to the vast majority of our lists, as the default for the access control keyword 'Attachments =' is yes.

Many owners prefer not to allow attachments because if large, can block up users mail boxes and can also carry viruses. For this reason some of our list owners configure their list(s) to reject attachments and use the file area instead (**Please see later article**). Listed below are the various ways in which you can use the Attachments keyword

### Attachments= Yes

All types of attachments are allowed to be posted to the list (the default). Note however that other configuration options may still disallow the posting of certain attachments, and that "Attachments= Yes" does not override them. For instance, if you have "Language= NoHTML", setting "Attachments= Yes" does not override the Language= setting. Or if you have "Sizelim=" set to a value that precludes a file of x number of lines from being posted to the list, setting "Attachments= Yes" will not override the Sizelim= setting if the message with its attachment exceeds the number of lines specified by Sizelim=.

### Attachments= No

All types of attachments are disallowed, other than plain text (always allowed) and HTML text (which is controlled exclusively by the "Language= NoHTML" keyword setting). With "Attachments= No", LISTSERV rejects messages containing attachments and bounces them back to the poster.

**N.B.** The reason HTML text is not subject to "Attachments=" filtering is to allow you to reject (bounce) messages with attachments, while silently suppressing HTML text in multi-part messages which also contain a plain-text alternative. Some mail programs send both HTML and plain-text versions of messages, and, even if you do not want HTML text on your list, there is little point in keeping out people who use it (who are often new to the Internet and aren't aware that their mail programs are sending HTML text) when you can simply remove the HTML part.

### Attachments= No,Filter

Same as "Attachments= No", except that LISTSERV simply removes the unwanted material from the message and processes it instead of rejecting it out of hand. The removal of material is a silent operation and the poster is not notified that the attachment was discarded.

**N.B. In all three of the above cases, when a message** containing one or more uuencoded files is posted to the list, the encoded file(s) is/are stripped from the body of the message and the remainder of the message is passed through to the list.

### Attachments= All

This setting tells LISTSERV to *allow* inline, uuencoded files, such as are generated by Microsoft Outlook, overriding the default.

**N.B. One important restriction:** UUencode filtering is strictly on/off. There is no attempt on the part of LISTSERV to guess file types when filtering is enabled (the default).





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## Attachments continued by Pam Delaney

This would be hazardous to begin with as support for these attachments is usually provided on a legacy basis in mail clients; that is, client A and client B could have a very different opinion on the type of the attachment.

It is also possible to allow certain MIME types to be passed through to the list while rejecting or filtering all others. For instance,

**Attachments= Yes,image,application/\*msword**

allows only the specified attachment types and rejects everything else. If you don't want to reject messages that contain other types of attachments, but just want to remove all other types of attachments, you add the ",Filter" parameter at the end of the line-- i.e.,

**Attachments= Yes,image,application/\*msword,Filter**

This means, "Allow all image and application/\*msword attachments, and strip all other attachments". Again, note that plain text ("Content-Type: text/plain") is always allowed and does not need to be included in the list of allowed attachment types. Likewise, HTML text is controlled exclusively by the "Language= NoHTML" keyword setting. Other text subtypes are, however, controlled by "Attachments=", so they need to be listed if you intend to allow them.

Additionally, should you wish to allow all inline uuencoded files but restrict the list to certain MIME types, you can specify, similar to the above, something like

**Attachments= All,image,application/\*msword**

or

**Attachments= All,image,application/\*msword,Filter**

(In the preceding examples note carefully that "image" by itself is equivalent to "image/\*", in other words, when you code "Attachments= image", you are saying that all MIME image sub-types, for example, "image/jpeg", "image/gif", and so forth, are to be accepted. If only certain sub-types are acceptable, for instance if you want to accept only JPEG graphics and ensure that others don't go through, you must specify the types explicitly e.g. "Attachments= image/jpeg".)

Note carefully that simply coding something like "Attachments= image" will not necessarily allow all image files through. This is highly dependent on the client being used by the poster. For instance, if your client attaches all binary files as "Content-Type= application/octet-stream", regardless of whether a given binary is (for instance) an executable image, a Word file, or a compressed archive, and you send a JPEG to a list with "Attachments= image" set in the header, it will be rejected since the image does not have a "Content-Type:

## JISCmail Training

The JISCmail team will be holding a summer workshop again this year at the [Rutherford Appleton Laboratory](#) in Oxfordshire. If you are a new list owner or one who would like to know more about the service, please contact the [Helpline](#).



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## Newcomers - File areas for lists by Sarah Steele

Are you aware that most lists have a file area? This can be a useful facility for when you need to attach a lengthy document (spreadsheet, image) to a posting. For instance, if you simply add a document as an attachment, it will increase download time, and not all subscribers will necessarily need or be able to read it. Alternatively, if you just added the text to your message, it could prove to be too lengthy for all but the most determined subscriber to wade through. However, if this attachment goes into the file area, it is easily accessible to anyone that needs it, but keeps the general archives tidy.

An obvious use for this facility, is for conference papers, which could be submitted as abstracts beforehand, or as complete papers after the event. Smaller meetings might also produce a similar need for this kind of shared material. In fact, there are many instances when literature needs to be distributed to the list as a whole, or to interested parties.

If the list is a private one, the file area will be password protected (this is different to your personal JISCmail user/password) - your list owner will normally send you the username and password when you join the list. You can access the file area in one of two ways: either by going to your list homepage and choosing that option from the menu, or by using the URL [www.jiscmail.ac.uk/LISTNAME](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/LISTNAME). To deposit files, you have to send them to the list owner, for them to store for you. Do this by sending an email to the following address where *listname* is the name of the list whose owner you wish to contact [listname-request@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:listname-request@jiscmail.ac.uk).

## Tips for Owners - Files by Pam Delaney

The 'File area for the list' that can be found on all list archive pages is where a list owner can store files for all the list members to view. Only the list owner(s) can upload/delete/edit these files and this is done via list management using the File Store button. It is very simple to use and self explanatory.

When loading a new file use the browse button to locate the file, fill in the description and press upload. Current files can be viewed, deleted or replaced

Private lists have their file area password protected using a username/password combination and the list owner needs to tell his membership what the password is. The username is always set to the name of the list in lower case. (A list owner(s) could add this information to the welcome message to new subscribers). Public and restricted lists do not have file area password protection.

N.B. The username/password combination is the one area of JISCmail that is case sensitive. We generally use lower case.

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## Philippa's new arrival

Philippa's baby arrived in February; a little boy named "Adam Philip" weighing 9lb 3 1/4. Both mother and baby are doing really well.

# JISCmail Helpline by Mavis Greenhalgh

If you are going to contact the JISCmail Helpline with a query then the following information will help us to help you.

The **LISTNAME** in full. e.g. OWNERS-ANNOUNCE. We have more than 5,000 lists so accurate names save time.

**Your name.** If you have a problem with old and new email addresses your name gives another method of searching.

**Your email address.** This is useful to search our log files etc. If there is a problem about postings then the e-mail address is a great help as is the **TIME** you had a problem. We have logs which cover every minute of every day and the time really helps to narrow the search.

An e-mail is easier for us to deal with but if your problem is awkward to describe then by all means telephone.

## JISCmail celebrates 5,000th mailing list

On Tuesday 6 April 2004 the Helpline staff set-up the 5,000th mailing list. To mark the occasion a framed certificate was sent to the lucky list owner. Coincidentally, in preparing this electronic newsletter I see the purpose of that particular list was for an electronic newsletter. The team would like to offer our best wishes to the list owner and wish them every success with their new list.

## JISCmail Statistics

A selection of JISCmail statistics for	February	March
distributed messages	12,144,701	12,254,848
new lists set up	80	57
new subscriptions	5989	4719
unique subscribers	369,354	374,303
active lists	4936	4988
spams detected	190,860	109,513
viruses received	129,252	94,684
viruses distributed	1	0
helpdesk phone queries	52	61
helpdesk email queries	900	1067

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Suggestions and ideas for publication in this newsletter are welcome, please email to:

[newsletter-request@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:newsletter-request@jiscmail.ac.uk)

The closing date for the next issue is 14th May 2004

**Penny Windebank, Editor**