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1. RSC EASTERN

JISC Regional Support Centre Eastern a 'Super User' of JISCMail

For a number of years now, RSC Eastern (RSCe) has been using the JISCMail facilities extensively as it helps us to communicate in a very effective and efficient manner.

Currently we have 17 different lists and in addition 9 Super lists. Super lists are 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.

Our JISCMail lists are all accessible via our home page at www.rsc-eastern.ac.uk via the menu item "JISCMail discussion", named so as to encourage users that it is a two way process. The lists have been built to enable either direct communications with a group of clients such as our senior management contacts or a combined group within a super list where we target as far as possible groups which would benefit from the same information. Our newsletter, 'e-bytes' is used in a similar fashion where a fortnightly news update is provided to subscribers.

We also opted to have customised templates so that our clients continue to experience our web site layout

The screenshot shows the RSCe website interface. At the top left is the RSCe logo. The main heading is 'Supporting e-learning in the Eastern Region'. Below this, there is a search bar and a 'JISCMail' logo. The page is titled 'List Archives' and shows a list of archives for 'e-bytes' newsletters for the Eastern Region, spanning from 2005 to 2006. The list includes links for each year and month, such as '2005', '2006', '2005-01', '2005-02', etc.

throughout. Many of these lists are public in that they can be viewed by anyone, we find it helpful to control list membership by using the request membership facility. Others are private including one for RSCe team members. The RSCe team list has proved invaluable as it is so easy to look back on the archives and find that document/message circulated previously! We also at times set up lists on a temporary basis, such as our 'e-Fair' planning group. For six years RSCe has facilitated an annual e-Fair and the mail list has been used to communicate between members of the planning group and using the shared file facility to communicate building plans and images of the venue. Although some of the members may well change over the years it is a simple process to review and change the membership of the list.

Other useful features of JISCMail from which we and our clients have benefitted include the use of the survey tool where we recently sought feedback on our website, e-newsletter and other communication channels. On a personal note I welcome the 'subscribers corner' feature where I can easily access those lists (especially the RSC Managers mail list!) I employ most heavily straight from the JISCMail home page.

There are of course many more JISCMail features and the above are those which we here at RSCe enjoy the most.

Gerard Hayes, Manager RSC Eastern



2. LIST HOMEPAGE CHANGES

You may have noticed that we have made some improvements to the default list homepage. These changes include:

- A new 'List Information' panel containing details such as the number of subscribers, discussion room participants, last post date, etc.
- JISCMail added functionality has been separated into a 'JISCMail Tools' panel, to improve emphasis and provide more room for archive links
- Contacts have been moved to the left-hand navigation bar and a link to the Helpline added

These changes make better use of space on the list homepage and were rolled out automatically to all list homepages that hadn't been customised by a list owner. If you have any questions regarding this email please contact the Helpline.

TIP

If you want your list members to be able to review the email addresses of other people on the list, set review = private

if you prefer to keep this information to list owner(s) only, set review = owner(s)

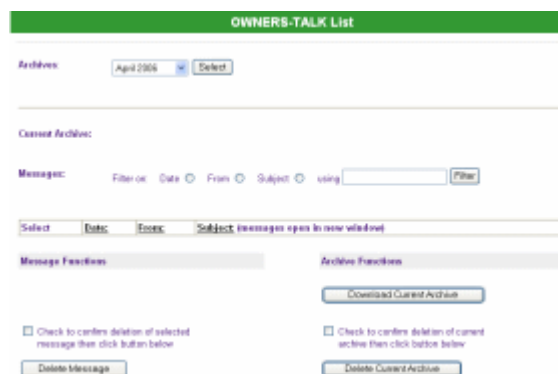
The use of Review= Public is not recommended, as it opens up the potential for email addresses to be harvested and used/misused for commercial purposes

3. ARCHIVE STORE

As part of our ongoing development of the JISCMail service, we have recently added an Archive Store feature. This allows list owners to delete individual messages and also entire month's or year's worth of messages via a simple new web interface. Previously, this required a list owner requesting this action via the helpline. For copyright protection reasons, there is no facility to edit a posting.

Spam doesn't often get through onto properly configured lists, but there may be occasions when an out of office or erroneous message is posted and then remains visible on the archives. These can cause some embarrassment to the original poster or detract from the general quality of archived material on a list archive. Alternatively many lists have been in existence for several years and some of the older messages are now no longer relevant to the list.

In the past, you probably didn't want to go to the effort of contacting us to arrange for message deletion, unless the message was clearly inappropriate, but now you can easily perform simple deletions and perhaps more frequent general housekeeping yourself.





This feature is available under list Management, via a new button, labelled "Archive Store" which displays the screen above.

You then need to select an archive file from the drop down list. All your archives are displayed, even if you have a mixture of weekly, monthly and yearly archives. Once you select an archive, the individual postings are displayed in a table below, with the Date, From email address and Subject line displayed. This list can be sorted by each of these columns using the column title links. A filter facility allows you to narrow down the list of messages by filtering on text you enter, for the column you select via the radio buttons.

The contents of the subject field are also a link to display that message in a new window, so you can readily check you are deleting the correct message. You can then delete the selected message or the entire archive file for your chosen week/month or year, remembering to also check the confirm box. Alternatively, you may download the entire archive, useful if you want to locally store the old archives before removing them from your list.

4. AUTO-DELETE

Properly configuring the auto-delete mechanism has multiple benefits for list owners. It reduces the amount of time the list owner needs to spend handling bounces manually; it reduces the resources wasted by the SMTP server attempting delivery to invalid addresses; and it helps to prevent list mailings from being misidentified as spam due to high bounce rates. Setting up auto-delete for your lists is very easy, but choosing the most appropriate and effective setting for your list can be confusing. Below are the different Auto-Delete options available and how to choose the best set of options for your LISTSERV list.

If The Validate keyword is set to "no", then the default option is

Auto-delete= Yes,Semi-auto,Delay(4),Max(100)

Setting the first parameter to "No" turns off automatic deletion for the list, and will instead forward all delivery errors to the list owner (or Errors-To) address for manual processing.

In "Semi-Auto" mode, the system will automatically delete invalid addresses from the list per the parameters set forth by the "Delay" and "Max" settings. If the system can't automatically process the bounce or if the bounce error is a temporary error (like "Mailbox Full"), the bounce gets passed along to the list owner for manual processing.

In "Full-Auto" mode, permanent errors that the system can't automatically process only show up on the Daily Error Monitoring Report(DEMR), and the bounce messages themselves are not delivered to the list owner. Temporary errors are discarded.

Once we've determined the auto-delete mode, we can assign settings for the "Delay" and "Max" settings. "Delay" and "Max" are settings that tune the bounce threshold at which the system will automatically remove invalid addresses.

The "Delay" and "Max" settings work together to determine at what point the system will delete a bouncing email address from the list. "Delay" tells the system how many days to monitor a bouncing address before taking action on it. "Max" allows us to tell the system some maximum number of bounces to allow within that monitoring period. For instance, if we set Delay(8) and Max(10), we're telling the system that if it sees



a bounce for a subscriber, the subscriber should be monitored for eight days.

If on the eighth day the system receives another bounce for that subscriber, the address will be removed from the list. If the system receives ten bounces for the subscriber before the end of the eight day monitoring period, the subscriber instead will be removed on the tenth bounced message. If, on the other hand, no additional bounces are received during the eight-day monitoring period, the system will stop monitoring that subscriber after the eighth day (until the address starts bouncing again).

Tuning the "Delay" and "Max" parameters is easiest on lists that receive a large amount of daily traffic. For instance, on a list that receives an average of ten posts each day, we might set something like:

Auto-Delete = Full-Auto, Delay(4), Max(20)

With the setting above, once we've received a bounce for a subscriber, we'll monitor the address for four days. If we receive twenty bounces for that address within the four-day period or if we receive bounced mail for it on the fourth day, the subscriber will be automatically deleted. Otherwise, the address will be removed from the DEMR report after the fourth day without any new bounces. We might adjust the "Delay" and "Max" parameters depending on how much traffic comes through the list and how zealous we want to be in removing addresses that bounce.

Tuning the Auto-Delete keyword is more difficult for lists that have less traffic. For example, if we have an announcement-style list that only receives postings once each week, the example setting above would mean that invalid addresses never get removed from the list, because there would never be a list posting four days after the initial bounce, and there would

never be twenty postings within that four-day period. For a weekly newsletter list, something like the following would be more appropriate:

Auto-Delete = Full-Auto, Delay(8), Max(2)
With this setting, we'll place bounced addresses on the monitoring report for eight days. If the address bounces twice within eight days (two consecutive newsletters), we'll delete it from the list. If it only bounces once and the second newsletter gets delivered with no bounce, the address will be removed from the monitoring report before the next mailing.

If we want to implement a zero-tolerance policy for bounced email addresses on a list, we can set:

Auto-Delete = Full-Auto, Delay(0), Max(1)
In this case, subscribers are never monitored, and instead get removed on the first bounced message.

TIP

To allow list members to unsubscribe from a list, within two clicks of the mouse, add the following to your bottom banner template, [BOTTOM_BANNER], substituting LISTNAME for the name of the list

To leave LISTNAME, click on the following URL, then click on the delete key

<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?SUBED1=LISTNAME&A=1>



5. SIZELIM

Sizelim= number/numberK/numberM

Sizelim, if set, causes LISTSERV to reject all messages to the list which exceed the number of lines (including all Internet header lines) indicated. This can be helpful in discouraging subscribers from posting long attachments to your lists. (Generally "Sizelim= 500 " is large enough for long posts but short enough to discourage postings of uuencoded binaries, but of course, your mileage may vary.)

The Sizelim= list header keyword allows list owners to specify a maximum message size in either kilobytes or megabytes, rather than in lines, if preferred. For instance:

Sizelim= 100K Reject messages over 100Kb

Sizelim= 1M Reject messages over 1Mb

As before, the limit operates against the entire message file, including all Internet header lines.

6. CHANGE TITLE/DESCRIPTION

As a list owner It is really quite simple to change both the title and description of your list(s).

Via the List Management page, enter **Configuration**. The first visible line is the title. The description is listed under the word description. Change the title (keeping to a max of 75 characters and/or the description and press update.

N.B. If your list has a public notebook the new title will not be visible in the A-Z or Category Pages until after the overnight web updates.

A Selection of JISCmail Statistics

	June	July
Active lists	5821	5862
Distributed messages	72811	63914
New lists set up	75	64
Unique subscribers	420572	421951
Spams detected	790907	912050
Viruses intercepted	0	0
Helpline queries	354	292

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