CREN's ListProcessor

ListProc: The list-management software of choice.

With ListProc, list management keeps getting easier and easier.

Why Use a List-Management System?

Electronic mailing lists (also known as discussion groups) offer a highly efficient way to both disseminate information to large numbers of people and hold long-distance discussions among many people. Internet mailing lists have become a critical component of scholarly collaboration. Many colleges and universities are also using them to facilitate and enhance classroom education. Mailing lists are an easy way to reach a lot of people very quickly, by automating the distribution of electronic mail to all those who subscribe to the mailing list. Electronic mail is the network communication service most likely to be supported and, for many, still the only network service available.

Electronic mailing-list management software makes it possible to automate and enhance many of the functions associated with electronic mailing lists. Some of these functions are:

- Self-subscription to mailing lists and self-unsubscription from lists by the participants themselves, with multiple options for the subscriber's interaction with the lists;
- Automatic removal of subscribers whose network addresses have become inoperative;
- Archiving list discussions and providing open or restricted access to those archives;
- Controlling who may subscribe to a list, who may post messages, and who may access list archives;
- Providing search capabilities for locating archived postings on a particular topic;
- Aggregating postings so that a subscriber can receive the entire day's or week's postings in a single mail message;
- Allowing users to search for mailing lists devoted to a specified topic;
- Providing access to and distribution of general information files (in addition to mailing-list archives) with automatic notification or file distribution to subscribers to this service, on a file-by-file basis, whenever a file is updated;
- Providing a mechanism for electronic publication through lists with controlled (or open) subscription;
- Providing easily used, flexible options for list behavior, such as:
  - Moderator review or actual editing of submissions to a moderated list prior to posting;
  - Limiting the number of postings per day;
  - Predefining the default behavior of replies to list postings;
  - Defining a list as visible to searches for lists by topic, or as "private" and hidden from such searches;
- Providing maximum control of subscriber interaction with the list to the subscribers themselves, and maximum control of individual list behavior to the list owners, consistent with security and the need for overall control by the hosting organization, in order to maximize the efficiency of the support staff at all levels;
- Providing intuitive interfaces for managing all interactions with the mailing lists and the list-management software, to maximize effectiveness and to minimize frustration and assistance required by subscribers, list owners and moderators, and list-management staff.

A good list-management package must also be efficient in its use of system resources, be effective in distributing postings to large (and small) lists, provide adequate control of system resources to prevent large list mailings from blocking other essential activities, and provide good system security.

CREN's ListProcessor

CREN's ListProc, versions 7.0 and higher, is a major upgrade to the free UNIX® ListProc 6.0c. It satisfies all the aforementioned functional requirements, is flexible, easy to use, and efficient, and complies with relevant Internet standards. ListProc's most basic subscriber interactions are LISTSERV-compatible. ListProc provides extensive list-control and list-configuration options to list owners, moderators, and managers through easily used commands. List archives are conveniently accessible via e-mail, ftp, the Internet Gopher, and WAIS®, with keyword searching of archives — including the use of logical expressions — supported through e-mail and WAIS. WAIS searches of list archives may also be set up to be accessible through the World Wide Web and its clients. Common subscriber commands are documented in the User Reference Card, available via anonymous ftp from info.cren.net as /listproc/usercard.ps or ...rtf and "landscape" formatted for folding to 5.5" by 8.5". ListProc also offers an extensive set of on-line help files.

Searching for mailing lists by subject is supported across multiple hosts and also allows the use of regular expressions. Lists may be hidden or public with respect to such searches, at the discretion of the list owner. Individual subscribers may also be hidden or public, if the list is configured to allow hidden subscribers. Posting to lists and access to list archives may independently be set by the list owner to be open, limited to subscribers or to owners, or (in a future update) limited to specified Internet domains. Lists are easily gatewayed (in both directions) with Newsgroups, and lists may be peered (run on multiple hosts with independent subscriber lists on each host).

List-management features are designed to maximize the productivity of list owners and system managers. List owners, moderators, and administrators find flexible, powerful, intuitive facilities for managing their lists, conveniently documented in the list-owner reference card, available on CREN's Web and Gopher servers (see below), and via anonymous ftp from info.cren.net as the file /listproc/ownercard.ps or ...rtf. A complete installation and procedures manual is also available for system administrators, as are on-line UNIX *man* pages.

Additional ListProc Capabilities

Anyone may use ListProc's help commands to obtain on-line descriptions of all ListProc commands or of specified individual commands. Anyone may review the intended use of any public list and the list of "visible" subscribers to any public list. Subscribers to ListProc lists may select to receive their list messages individually as posted or as collections of messages aggregated over a time interval selected by the list owner, typically 24 hours. Subject to the list's configuration, a subscriber may set alias addresses (different from the one to which the list mail is sent) for mailing to a subscriber-only list, change his or her list address without unsubscribing, change his or her list password (required for certain operations), and conceal his or her subscription to the list. Subscribers may temporarily disable receipt of list mail without unsubscribing, terminate all their subscriptions to lists on a specified host with a single command, and obtain, with a single command, a list of all their list subscriptions on a specified host.

With release 7.1, ListProc provides user-selectable notification of changes or automatic distribution of files, whenever user-selected files are modified by their maintainers. With ListProc 7.1, the default handling of the "To:", "Cc:", and "Reply-To:" mail headers is to leave them as provided by the originator of the message, but previous header-handling options remain available for those who wish to utilize them. Release 7.1 also includes a number of other enhancements to further improve the user interface, system efficiency, and the handling of very large lists.

List owners may select whether messages posted to a list are to be posted without review, reviewed by a moderator before posting, or optionally edited before posting. List owners provide the description of the list, an optional descriptive "personal" name for the list, any restrictions on the subscriber options allowed for the list, and any restrictions on who may subscribe to the list, who may review its description and subscriber list, who may access its archives, and who may access statistics on its use. List owners determine if the lists provide optional aggregation of messages, and the aggregation period. They select the options for how mail headers are handled by the list. Easily used commands with intuitive keywords provide convenient set-up and reconfiguration of lists by system administrators and list owners, without the need for shutting down the list or the server. List maintenance is facilitated by optional automatic unsubscription based on analysis of bounced list mail.

ListProc includes an interactive command protocol and interface for optional use by system managers, list owners, and list subscribers in performing almost all interactions with the list-management system. Future Mac, MS-Windows, and X clients will provide point-and-click interaction, built on this protocol, for subscribers, list owners, and system managers.

When used with the Zmailer Mail Transfer Agent software, ListProc can manage lists with 20,000 or more subscribers, and its efficiency is regularly being improved. For smaller lists, ListProc can also be used with sendmail and most other Mail Transfer Agents. ListProc prevents and detects looping through use of MD5 checksums and a variety of other techniques.

Availability and Cost of CREN's ListProc

CREN's ListProc is currently available for the SunOS® 4.1, Solaris® 2.x, AIX®, ULTRIX®, OSF/1®, HP-UX®, and SGI's IRIX® operating systems and will be ported to other UNIX platforms. ListProc will be electronically delivered upon receipt of a properly executed license agreement and any required fees. An on-line information file detailing procedures for obtaining ListProc may be procured by e-mail, Gopher, or anonymous ftp as described below in "On-Line Information".

Each CREN member (nonprofit or for-profit) is eligible for one free license to ListProc and may license additional copies at $250 per year. The same will apply to nonprofit members of cooperating international network providers that sign an agreement with CREN and agree to provide technical support for ListProc to their member organizations.

Nonprofit organizations that are not members of CREN or of a cooperating international network provider may license ListProc for $2,000 per year per copy.

For-profit organizations that are not CREN members may license ListProc for $2,500 per year per copy.

The ListProc license is normally for perpetual use of the software, but upgrades and continuing support are provided only if the license fee is paid annually. (Exceptions in the term of the license are made for special situations, such as limited-term licenses for testing the software.) The ListProc license fee is independent of the size of the computer on which the software is used and of the number of lists supported with it.

Support

Continuing support for the use of its ListProc will be provided electronically by CREN for its members and other organizations that license the software directly from CREN. Cooperating Networks are responsible for supporting the use of the software by their member organizations. Feedback from all users of the software about their needs and requirements is encouraged by CREN as part of the continuing development process.

On-line Information

Information about ListProc and CREN's other services is available under "ListProcessor" from CREN's WorldWide Web server (http://www.cren.net/) and CREN's Gopher server (Gopher.cren.net or info.cren.net), and via anonymous ftp to info.cren.net or ftp.cren.net, in the /listproc subdirectory.

The procedures for obtaining CREN's ListProc are described in an information file available in CREN's WWW server under "ListProcessor" as "Information", via anonymous ftp from info.cren.net as /listproc/info, via Gopher as the file "CREN ListProcessor Information" in the directory "CREN ListProcessor", or by sending e-mail to listproc@listproc.net with the command

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send listproc info
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as the body of the message. This file also documents other information about ListProc.

Additional information about CREN is also available from CREN's Web server (click "CREN"), via Gopher in the "CREN" subdirectory, and via anonymous ftp. The ftp name of the file with information about CREN's projects is /cren/brochure. The terms and conditions of CREN membership are documented in /cren/terms, and CREN dues are found in /cren/cost. CREN's newsletters are found using the path /cren/cren-newsletter.

For further information, contact CREN through e-mail to listproc-info@listproc.net or to cren@cren.net, or call CREN at 202-331-5360.

Find out why ListProc has become the list management software of choice!

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