Distribution Lists – General Principles

Distribution Lists are a powerful means to exchange information with selected people interested in a given topic. Messages are received as ordinary e–mail messages. The main difference with news groups is that one does not have to connect to a server to know if something new has happened: messages will arrive automatically in your mailbox. If no messages are delivered it just simply means that there is no exchange on the subject of the distribution list on a particular day.

Of course it does require some preliminary arrangement to register at a list server, called *listserv*, on a list which is devoted to a given subject. Each participant may `unsubscribe` from the list at any moment. Thus one remains master of the information received.

Using a listserv

We will first learn how to speak to the listserv and how to use a list.

The listserv is just a robot which understands a few commands to `subscribe` to a list and to `unsubscribe`. It also answers some very simple queries. Commands are sent to the listserv in the body of e–mail messages. Thus a listserv has an e–mail address just like ordinary people but its understanding is very limited. For instance the listserv which manages the IUCr distribution list is located at *listserv@lmcp.jussieu.fr*.

Messages among participants must not be sent to the listserv but to a special address. For instance messages to be distributed among crystallographers must be sent to *iucr@lmcp.jussieu.fr*, different from the listserv address. Such messages are distributed to all the others on the list.

A list may be *moderated* in which case the editor must validate any message before broadcasting them. Some lists are private, *i.e.* the editor must approve any registration.

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[1] http://www.iucr.ac.uk/iucr–top/welcome.html
[2] int.index.html
[3] int.index.html
[4] int.list.cmd.html
[5] int.list.exch.html
[6] int.list.crys.html
[7] http://www.lmcp.jussieu.fr/~epelboin /