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**Mailing list protocol**  
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Abstract

This document discusses about a mailing list protocol. This protocol is not a protocol for communication devices. It is a code of courtesy that the reader may wish to extend to others to facilitate the exchange of opinions and ideas, and to facilitate mailing list discussions.

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## 1. Introduction

Since the last century people participating in the IETF indulged themselves by sending messages to mailing list. These messages can still be read as they are publicly accessible. Some of these message document the war of words and the numerous personal disagreements that happened during the development of Internet protocols.

This document discusses about a mailing list protocol. This protocol is not a protocol for communication devices. It is a code of courtesy that the reader may wish to extend to others to facilitate the exchange of opinions and ideas, and to facilitate mailing list discussions.

## 2. Mailing list protocol

When you write a message to a mailing list, remember that anyone in the world can read it.

It is better not to send heated messages ("flames") to a mailing list even if you are provoked. Wait a day before sending a response to a mailing list if you strongly disagree.

If you are forwarding a message to a mailing list, do not change the wording. If the message was a personal message to you and you are sending it to a mailing list, ask for permission first.

It is a good idea to at least check all the mailing list messages about the subject before responding to a message.

Trim the email addresses to which the message is addressed when replying if the messages have become a two-way conversation.

Be brief without being overly terse. When replying to a message, include enough original material to be understood but no more. It is easier to read a message when a quote indicator (>) is used to indicate quoted lines.

It is bad form to simply reply to a message by including all the previous message: edit out all the irrelevant material.

Use subject heading which reflects the content of the message.

The people with whom you communicate are located across the world. Give them the time to read their email before assuming the email didn't arrive or that they don't care. If you think the importance of a message justifies it, immediately reply briefly to a message to



let the sender know you got it, even if you will send a longer reply later.

Read the mailing lists for a few weeks before you post anything. This helps you to get an understanding of the culture of the group.

### **3. Internationalization Considerations**

The recipient is a human being whose culture, language, and humor is different from your own. Date formats, measurements, and idioms can easily be misunderstood. Be especially careful with sarcasm.

"Reasonable" expectations for conduct via email depend on your relationship to a person and the context of the communication.

Norms

learned in a particular email environment may not apply in general to your email communication with people across the Internet. Be careful with slang or local acronyms.

### **4. Security Considerations**

It is not possible to recall or delete a message once it has been posted to a mailing list. Think carefully before sending private or confidential information to a mailing list.

### **5. IANA Considerations**

This document does not request any action from IANA.

### **6. Acknowledgements**

Most of the text in Sections [2](#) and [3](#) of this document is based on [RFC 1855](#) authored by Sally Hambridge.

### **7. References**

#### 7.1. Informative References

[RFC1855] Hambridge, S., "Netiquette Guidelines", FYI 28, [RFC 1855](#), October 1995.





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