

Mailing Lists Using Mailman

<http://ist.uwaterloo.ca/cs/sew/courses/tech/mailman.html>

Skills for the Electronic Workplace

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Mailman is the Web-based mail list manager. It allows list owners to create and modify lists easily as well as add and remove subscribers without having to know specific commands.

In this course we will be using Windows Internet Explorer.

List subscribers can easily modify their list subscriptions and preferences. You may already be familiar with other mail list managers such as Majordomo, which will be phased out soon. Many people find Mailman more convenient and easier to use than email-based mail list managers, and they are accessible to others to use. List Administrators can have all email sent to a mailman group moderated by the list owner, or create other moderators.

What are the benefits of using mailman?

- Many people find Mailman more convenient and easier to use than email-based mail list managers (like Majordomo.)
- Mailman allows list owners to create and modify lists easily as well as add and remove subscribers without having to know specific commands.
- List subscribers (members) can easily modify their list subscriptions and preferences.
- Mailman is designed to protect list subscribers from SPAM email harvesting.
- Mailman supports built-in archiving, automatic bounce processing, content filtering, digest delivery, and more.
- Mailman is integrated with the web, making it easy for users to manage their accounts and for list owners to administer their lists from any internet capable computer.

Is there a naming convention for the name of the mailman address?

- No, however there are some administrative list name suffixes and prefixes that are to be avoided for use as part of a list name.
- They are: -admin, -bounces, -confirm, -join, -leave, -owner, or owner-, -request, -subscribe, and -unsubscribe.

Is there a limit of characters for the list's name?

There is an upper limit of 256 characters for a list name, but for practical reasons you are best to consider using departmental initial/acronyms to signify ownership, along with one or two words that reflect the list's purpose, entirely in lower case, either with no spaces between the words, or with the words separated by hyphens.

- Acceptable examples: 'mylistname' or 'my-list-name'
- Not acceptable are: 'MyListName' or 'My-List-Name'

How do I start using Mailman for my mailing list?

1. Submit a request to create a mailing list to: request@ist.uwaterloo.ca
2. You will receive an email response to confirm the list has been created. The email will include your administrative password along with links to configure the list and brief instructions to get you started.

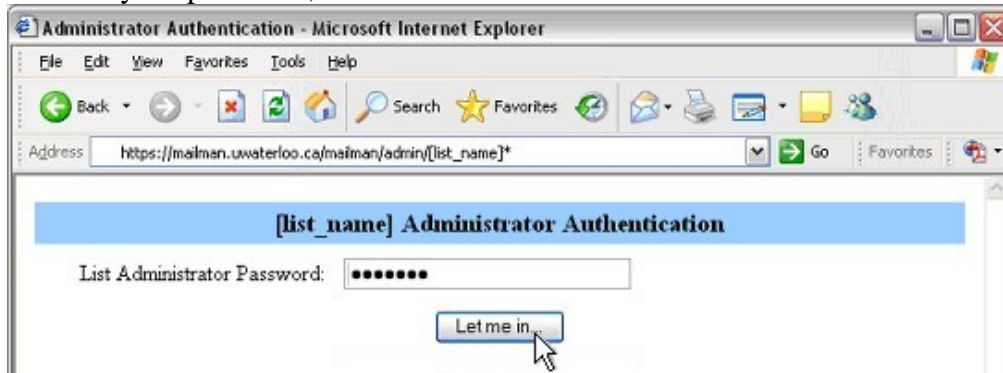
~ A sheet with account information is provided for the Mailman SEW course .~

3. Authenticate to **[https://lists.uwaterloo.ca/mailman/admin/\[list_name\]*](https://lists.uwaterloo.ca/mailman/admin/[list_name]*)** (*replace '[list_name]' with your mailing list's name here, and in the following steps.)
 - o From this point on, you must have cookies enabled in your browser, otherwise no administrative changes will take effect:

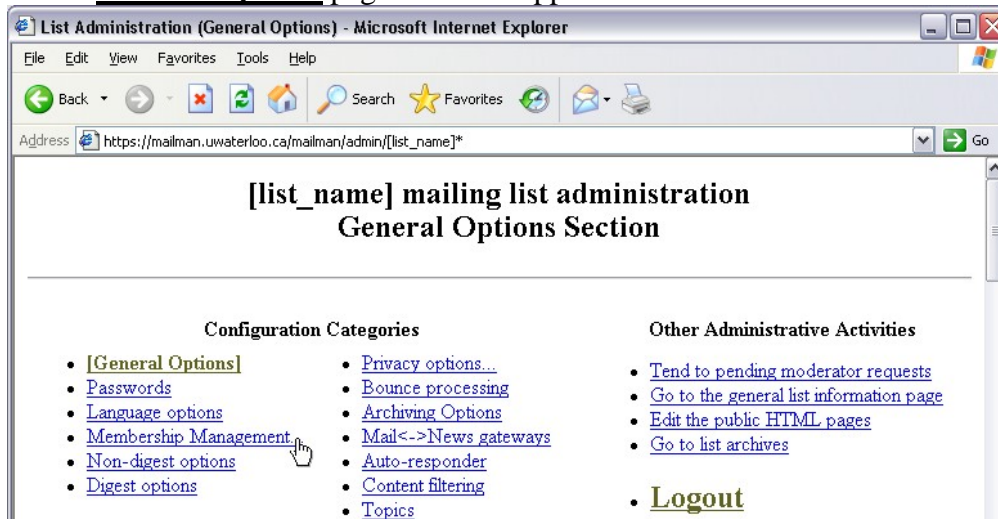
Tools | Internet Options... | Security | Trusted Sites | Sites

Input: **<https://lists.uwaterloo.ca>** &
<https://mailman.uwaterloo.ca>

4. Enter your password, and then click the “**Let me in...**” button as shown below.



5. The **General Options** page will then appear.



How do I add list administrators or moderators?

1. Browse a bit further down the General Options page.

General Options	
Fundamental list characteristics, including descriptive info and basic behaviors.	
Description	Value
<i>General list personality</i>	
The public name of this list (make case-changes only). (Details for real name)	<input type="text" value="[list_name]"/>
The list administrator email addresses. Multiple administrator addresses, each on separate line is okay. (Details for owner)	<input type="text" value="userid@server.uwaterloo.ca"/>
The list moderator email addresses. Multiple moderator addresses, each on separate line is okay. (Details for moderator)	<input type="text" value="userid2@server.uwaterloo.ca
userid3@server2.uwaterloo.ca"/>

2. Edit the existing **list administrator** or **list moderator** field to show your email address.
3. Browse to the bottom of the page and click the “**Submit Your Changes**” button.

How do I view the email addresses of list members?

1. From the General Options page as shown on page 3, click “Membership Management...” (The fourth item down listed under Configuration Categories.)

Configuration Categories	Other Administrative Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Options• Passwords• Language options• Membership Management...<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ [Membership List]◦ Mass Subscription◦ Mass Removal• Non-digest options• Digest options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Privacy options...• Bounce processing• Archiving Options• Mail<->News gateways• Auto-responder• Content filtering• Topics• Tend to pending moderator requests• Go to the general list information page• Edit the public HTML pages• Go to list archives• Logout

2. Scroll down the page to see the Membership List (see top of next page.)

Make your changes in the following section, then submit them using the *Submit Your Changes* button below.

Membership List

Find member ([help](#)):

[Click here to include the legend for this table.](#)

4 members total										
unsub	member address member name	mod	hide	normal [reason]	ack	not metoo	nodupes	digest	plain	language
<input type="checkbox"/>	bjhicks@list.uwaterloo.ca Bob Hicks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	English (USA) ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	kdpeck@list.uwaterloo.ca Keith Peck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	English (USA) ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	lsmith@list.uwaterloo.ca Laura Smith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	English (USA) ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	p.day@list.uwaterloo.ca Peggy Day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	English (USA) ▾

User Note: from the Privacy Options settings, (second to last option on that page) there are three options as to who can view the list: a) Anyone, b) List members, or c) List admin only. The default value for a new Mailman list is “List members.”

How do I add email addresses? (Administrators and Moderators)

- From the Membership Management... page, click “Mass Subscription” then scroll down the Mass Subscriptions page.

- [Membership Management...](#)
 - [Membership List](#)
 - [\[Mass Subscription\]](#)
 - [Mass Removal](#)
- [Non-digest options](#)
- [Digest options](#)

- [Mail<->News gateways](#)
- [Auto-responder](#)
- [Content filtering](#)
- [Topics](#)

- [Go to the general list information page](#)
- [Edit the public HTML pages](#)
- [Go to list archives](#)

- [Logout](#)

Make your changes in the following section, then submit them using the *Submit Your Changes* button below.

Mass Subscriptions

Subscribe these users now or invite them? Subscribe Invite

Send welcome messages to new subscribers? No Yes

Send notifications of new subscriptions to the list owner? No Yes

Enter one address per line below...

...or specify a file to upload:

- There are two options:
 - Enter new subscribers, one per line, in the entry box, or
 - Upload a file – use the “Browse...” button to select the file. (*Note: the one-per-line rule also applies to uploaded files. Comma or tab delimited files will load only the first name in the list.*) **Note:** You can do a Mass Subscription with real names if you use one of the following formats:
 - John Doe <jdoe@example.com>
 - "John Doe" <jdoe@example.com>
 - jdoe@example.com (John Doe)
- Then click the “**Submit Your Changes**” button at the bottom of the page.

For List Members / Subscribers

1. A person can submit a subscription request to a list by going to the Mailing list Information page: [https://lists.uwaterloo.ca/mailman/listinfo/\[list_name\]](https://lists.uwaterloo.ca/mailman/listinfo/[list_name])
2. On the page section with the heading: “**Subscribing to...**” [list_name], the subscriber would need to enter the following: Email address, Name (optional), Pick a password, Re-enter your password.

Subscribing to [list_name]

Subscribe to [list_name] by filling out the following form. This is a closed list, which means your subscription will be held for approval. You will be notified of the list moderator's decision by email. This is also a private list, which means that the list of members is not available to non-members.

Your email address:

Your name (optional):

You may enter a privacy password below. This provides only mild security, but should prevent others from messing with your subscription. **Do not use a valuable password** as it will occasionally be emailed back to you in cleartext.

If you choose not to enter a password, one will be automatically generated for you, and it will be sent to you once you've confirmed your subscription. You can always request a mail-back of your password when you edit your personal options.

Pick a password:

Reenter password to confirm:

Which language do you prefer to display your messages?

Would you like to receive list mail batched in a daily digest? No Yes

3. Then click the “**Subscribe**” button.

-
4. The moderator will receive an email that they have a pending subscription request.
 5. They will view the following details when they sign in as a moderator to the list.

Subscription Requests

Address/name	Your decision	Reason for refusal
[userid]@ [server].uwaterloo.ca <i>Proper Name</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Defer <input type="radio"/> Approve <input type="radio"/> Reject <input type="radio"/> Discard <input type="checkbox"/> Permanently ban from this list	<input type="text"/>

6. The choices are to Defer, Approve, Reject, Discard, or Permanently ban from this list – and then click the “Submit All Data” button.

-
7. You will be notified of the list moderator's decision by email.

Subscriber Note: Similar to Majordomo and other email based mailing list systems, an email can be sent to the Mailman list name using the ‘-request’ command:

- Address the email to: [list_name]-request@lists.uwaterloo.ca
- Use a subject line reading: “subscribe”

As in the previous example, Administrative approval will likely be required.

How do I delete email addresses?

A. For list Administrators and Moderators...

1. Under “**Membership Management...**” (Membership List) scroll down to view the membership list.

4 members total										
unsub	member address member name	mod	hide	nomail [reason]	ack	not metoo	nodupes	digest	plain	language
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	bhicks@ist.uwaterloo.ca	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	English (USA) ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	kdpeck@ist.uwaterloo.ca	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	English (USA) ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	ismith@ist.uwaterloo.ca	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	English (USA) ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	pday@ist.uwaterloo.ca	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	English (USA) ▾

- a. Click on the “unsub” checkbox for the member(s) to be unsubscribed.
 - b. Then click “**Submit Your Changes**” button at bottom of page.
2. Or from “**Membership Management...**” go to to the “**Mass Removal**” page.

Send unsubscription acknowledgement to the user? No Yes

Send notifications to the list owner? No Yes

Enter one address per line below...

```
kdpeck@ist.uwaterloo.ca
pday@ist.uwaterloo.ca
```

...or specify a file to upload: N:\subscriber-list.txt

- a. Enter one address per line as shown in the text box, or click the “**Browse...**” button to upload a file.
- b. Then click the “**Submit Your Changes**” button.

B. For list Subscribers / Members... (remember to “Logout” as the list administer.)

1. Go to the mailing list information page:
 - a. E.g.: [https://lists.uwaterloo.ca/mailman/listinfo/\[list_name\]](https://lists.uwaterloo.ca/mailman/listinfo/[list_name]) and scroll down to the page bottom.

[list_name] Subscribers

(The subscribers list is only available to the list members.)

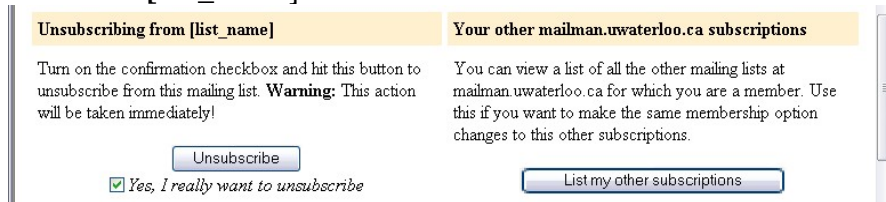
Enter your address and password to visit the subscribers list:

Address: Password:

- b. Enter your email address and password, then click the “**Visit Subscriber List**” button.



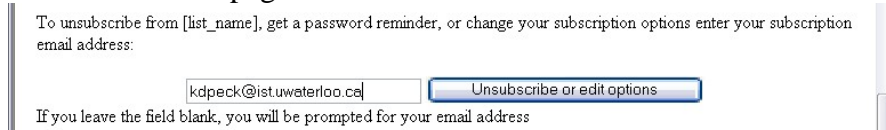
- c. Click on your email address.
- d. Scroll down the mailing list configuration page to the “**Unsubscribing from [list_name]**” section as shown below.



- e. Click the “*Yes, I really want to unsubscribe*” checkbox.
- f. Then click the “**Unsubscribe**” button.

2. Or, again from the mailing list information page:

- a. E.g.: [https://lists.uwaterloo.ca/mailman/listinfo/\[list_name\]](https://lists.uwaterloo.ca/mailman/listinfo/[list_name]) and scroll down to the page bottom.



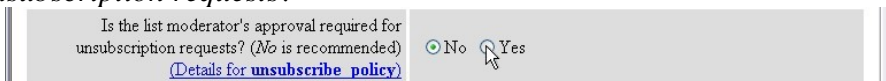
- b. This time enter your email address in the lower box, then click the “**Unsubscribe or edit options**” button.
- c. Scroll down the mailing list options page to “**Unsubscribe**”



- d. Click on the “**Unsubscribe**” button.
- e. An email is sent to the address and the member will only be removed if they send a confirmation response.

The Administrator can set unsubscribe request to require the list moderator’s approval.

1. On the “**Privacy Options...**” [**Subscription Rules**] page
2. Scroll down and click on “**Yes**” for “*Is the list moderator’s approval required for unsubscription requests?*”



3. Scroll to the page bottom and click the “**Submit Your Changes**” button.

How can I view all of the mailing lists at mailman.uwaterloo.ca for which I am a member?

1. Go to one of your lists' General Information pages, and browse down to the **Mailing List Subscriber** fields to "Enter your address and password to visit the subscribers list:" (steps B.1.a & b from previous example.)
2. Click on your email address to visit your subscription options page.
3. In the second section on the right: "Your other mailman.uwaterloo.ca subscriptions" click the "List my other subscriptions" button.

The screenshot shows two side-by-side panels. The left panel, titled "Unsubscribing from list-es-test", contains a warning: "Turn on the confirmation checkbox and hit this button to unsubscribe from this mailing list. Warning: This action will be taken immediately!" Below this is an "Unsubscribe" button and a checkbox labeled "Yes, I really want to unsubscribe". The right panel, titled "Your other mailman.uwaterloo.ca subscriptions", contains the text: "You can view a list of all the other mailing lists at mailman.uwaterloo.ca for which you are a member. Use this if you want to make the same membership option changes to this other subscriptions." Below this is a button labeled "List my other subscriptions" which is highlighted with a mouse cursor.

4. A page will appear of your mailman.uwaterloo.ca subscriptions.

Going on Vacation?

1. From the Subscription Options page browse down to "**Mail Delivery.**"
2. Click "Disabled" and then "Set globally."

The screenshot shows a section titled "Mail delivery". The text reads: "Set this option to *Enabled* to receive messages posted to this mailing list. Set it to *Disabled* if you want to stay subscribed, but don't want mail delivered to you for a while (e.g. you're going on vacation). If you disable mail delivery, don't forget to re-enable it when you come back, it will not be automatically re-enabled." To the right of the text are two radio buttons: "Enabled" (which is selected) and "Disabled". Below the radio buttons is a button labeled "Set globally" with a mouse cursor pointing to it.

3. Scroll down to the page bottom and click the "Submit My Changes" button.

Use this if you want to make the same membership option changes to your other subscriptions – for example: when you go away temporarily on vacation. (Please remember to reset things by clicking "Enabled" and "Set globally" when you come back.)

Does the email get sent immediately, or is it delayed?

All new Mailman lists are set to require the approval of a moderator, so by default emails will be delayed.

The screenshot shows a web interface for a moderated email. At the top, it says "From:[userid]@[server].uwaterloo.ca". Below this is a section titled "Action to take on all these held messages:" with four radio buttons: "Defer", "Accept" (which is selected), "Reject", and "Discard". There are also three checkboxes: "Preserve messages for the site administrator", "Forward messages (individually) to:" (with a text input field containing "[list_name]-owner@mailman.uwaterloo.ca"), and "Clear this member's moderate flag". To the right of these options is a message preview: "Click on the message number to view the individual message, or you can view all messages from [userid]@[server].uwaterloo.ca". Below the preview are the message details: "[1] Subject: [Userid] test of mailman list 'list_name'", "Size: 2367 bytes", "Reason: Post to moderated list", and "Received: Tue Nov 23 14:26:00 2004". At the bottom of the interface is a button labeled "Submit All Data" with a mouse cursor pointing to it.

2. Browse down to the fourth setting on the page: “**List of non-member addresses whose postings should be automatically accepted.**”
3. Enter each alternate email address on a separate line.

List of non-member addresses whose postings should be automatically accepted.
[\(Details for accept these nonmembers\)](#)

pat.smith@uwaterloo.ca
pat_smith@gmail.ca

4. Scroll to the page bottom and click the “**Submit Your Changes**” button.

You can add other non-member addresses to allow postings from specific email accounts, or filters to allow all postings from either a server, or a domain...

Allow a posting from any ‘uwaterloo.ca’ address

1. At the setting: “**List of non-member addresses whose postings should be automatically accepted.**”
2. Enter the following:

`^.*uwaterloo\.ca$`

3. Scroll to the page bottom and click the “**Submit Your Changes**” button.

Can I attach a file to the email?

- Yes, use your regular email program and follow the normal procedures for attaching a file and send it to [list_name]@lists.uwaterloo.ca
- The sender will receive a notice by email to inform them that “*Your message to [list_name] awaits moderator approval*” if there is moderation on the list.
- The original email will then be forwarded to all list members once the moderator has approved the message.

Note: it is considered bad practice to send attachments to a mailing list. It is far better to make an image or document available on a web page and refer the members of your list to the appropriate web address through a hyperlink within the message.

Is there a size limit for attachments?

Yes, by default from the list administrative interface **General Options** page, ‘*Maximum length of message body*’- (fourth from the bottom of the page)

Maximum length in kilobytes (KB) of a message body. Use 0 for no limit.
[\(Edit max message size\)](#) 40

Host name this list prefers for email.
[\(Details for host name\)](#) mailman.uwaterloo.ca

Should messages from this mailing list include the [RFC 2369](#) (i.e. List-*) headers? *Yes* is highly recommended.
[\(Details for include rfc2369 headers\)](#) No Yes

Should postings include the List-Post: header?
[\(Details for include list post header\)](#) No Yes

- The default is 40 KB. No limit is achieved by entering a value of '0.'
- Mailman considers attached files as part of the body.
- You can increase the allowable size as your needs may require but keep in mind that there is also an email message size restriction of 10 MB on many UW email servers.

Will my message to the list get marked as 'SPAM'?

List member's messages are normally fine, but you should use regular caution to avoid words and phrases that Spam Assassin or a personal email rule might identify as being spam.

Is there a limit of email addresses for one list?

- 25,000 is a workable limit (depending upon the computer platform) but upwards of 40,000 addresses for a single list have been done on high-end machines.
- However, you can create an *'umbrella'* list to distribute a mailing out to a collection of lists, then in turn on to the members of each list. An umbrella list with only two levels would therefore have the potential to reach more than 625,000,000 recipients.
- An umbrella list may also be worth considering if there is a portion of the membership list that changes over a period of time. Using this format might help to make the list easier to manage and update.

Note: your list has to be configured properly to allow for the email messages to be sent out to large numbers of members...

1. Sign into your mailing list as an administrator.
2. Click on "**Privacy Options...**" in the top-middle of the options section.
3. Then click on "**Recipient filters**" the third bullet under Privacy Options.
4. Scroll down the page to "***Ceiling on acceptable number of recipients for a posting.***" If a posting has this number, or more, of recipients, it is held for admin approval.

The screenshot shows a web form with a grey background. At the top, it says "Ceiling on acceptable number of recipients for a posting." followed by a small icon of a document with a checkmark and an empty input field. Below this is a link: "(Details for max num recipients)". At the bottom of the form is a yellow button with the text "Submit Your Changes" and a mouse cursor pointing to it.

5. For lists beyond ten members you will want to increase the number or enter a value '0' for no ceiling – otherwise messages will be held even if you intended to allow all, or a few of your list's members to send messages without requiring moderation.
6. Click the "**Submit Your Changes**" button at the bottom of the page.

How do I prevent a spammer from accessing the email addresses?

By default your mailing list will be viewable only by members of the subscription list.

1. Go to the “**Privacy Options...**” configuration page.
2. The first listed Privacy option “**Advertise this list when people ask what lists are on this machine?**” determines if the list is Private = ‘No’ or Public = ‘Yes’



The screenshot shows a configuration section titled "Subscribing". It contains a form element with the text "Advertise this list when people ask what lists are on this machine?". Below this text are two radio buttons: "No" (which is selected) and "Yes". There is also a link labeled "(Edit advertised)" below the radio buttons.

Who can view the list?

1. Scroll to the bottom of the “**Privacy options...**” page.
2. The choices are: “**Anyone, List members, or List admin only.**”



The screenshot shows a configuration section titled "Membership exposure". It contains two form elements. The first is "Who can view subscription list?" with a link "(Details for private roster)" and three radio buttons: "Anyone", "List members" (which is selected), and "List admin only". The second is "Show member addresses so they're not directly recognizable as email addresses?" with a link "(Details for obscure addresses)" and two radio buttons: "No" and "Yes" (which is selected).

3. Also, for “**Show member addresses so they're not directly recognizable as email addresses?**” the default is “**Yes.**” This option causes member email addresses to be transformed when they are presented on list web pages (both in text and as links), so they're not trivially recognizable as email addresses. The intention is to prevent the addresses from being snooped up by automated web scanners for use by spammers.

I have a Majordomo list; can I easily transfer the email addresses from it to the mailman list? Can I 'cut and paste'?

A Majordomo List administrator can generate a list of subscribed users by sending an email to the list with a single line in the body of the message reading: “who list_name” (Replace “list_name” with the name of your list.)

1. Copy the list from the email that you receive in reply, and then paste it into the “Enter new subscribers, one per line, in the entry box” section on the Mass Subscription page.

Or,

1. Copy the list from the email that you receive in reply, and then paste the list into a text editor program (e.g. Windows Notepad).
 - a. Edit the list to contain only one email address per line.
 - b. Save the file.
 - c. Upload the file on the Mass Subscription page.
2. Click the “Submit Your Changes” button at the bottom of the page.

Or,

1. A Majordomo List administrator can submit an email request to IST (request@ist.uwaterloo.ca) to have the Majordomo membership list and archives transferred into a Mailman list and archives.

Mailman Resources on the web

- The Mailman (GNU Mailing List Manager) Website:
<http://www.gnu.org/software/mailman/>
 - The home of the software used to create Mailman mailing lists.
 - The page contains many useful links including a Mailman Frequently Asked Question page (FAQ)
<http://www.gnu.org/software/mailman/faq.html>
- Chris Kolar (from the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy) is a recognized source for Mailman User Guide documentation.
<http://staff.imsa.edu/%7Eckolar/mailman/index.html>
 - You will find links to a number of list user and manager documents from his page.