Campus Mailing Lists

‘powered by’

Sympa
Overview

• Sympa
  – Current Version
  – Features Highlights
  – Notable Questions
  – Data Source examples
  – Service roadmap
  – References
Sympa – v6.1.23

- Perl based
- Supported by Renater
  - [https://www.renater.fr/](https://www.renater.fr/)
  - CRU (Network of Universities Committee)

- MTA PostFix
- DB MySQL
- Authentication
  - UIUC netID
  - email address
- Referential Sync lists with external sources
- N/A
- Web Server Apache

Sympa Features
6.1.15 – 6.1.23

• Confidential lists (v6.1.17)
  – Lists with all possible restrictions (restricted subscriptions, archives, listing, etc...)

• i18n options for parameters and subscriber options (v6.1.18)

• DMARC workaround (v6.1.22)

• Additional DKIM options (v6.1.23)
Sympa Features

• Feature Highlights
  – Email interface
  – Web interface
  – Archive
  – Shared documents
  – Unsubscribe footer
  – DMARC

• Feature Road Map
  – DKIM
  – SOAP
Subscriber – email interface

• email address for commands
  – lists@lists.Illinois.edu
  – Commands in the subject or the body (not both!)
  – Multiple commands in body, one command per line
  – Sympa will ignore the message if the subject AND body contain data

• Example
  To: lists@lists.Illinois.edu
  Subject: (command) listName
    e.g. subscribe listName
         unsubscribe listName
Subscriber – email commands

To: lists@lists.Illinois.edu
Subject: (command)

• Basic Commands
  – Subject: Help - server responds with a list of all commands
  – Subject: LISTS -server responds with the open list names
  – Subject: INFO listName - server responds with list descriptions provide by the list owner
  – Etc, etc, etc.... Send the Help command for the complete list of email commands

• The complete list of email commands for subscribers & owners
Sympa Features – Web UI

• i18n Language Control – Per User Acct
Sympa Web UI

- Subscriber “Per List” Preferences

- Digest (List Owner defined)

- Visibility (membership visibility in “Review members” list)
Sympa Features

Archives

• Owner defined access control
• (Admin) > Edit List Config > Archives
• Web Archive

access right

Web archives (web_archive)

access right (access): public (public)
quota (quota): Kbytes
Maximum number of month archived (max_month): 

Email/Text Archive

access right

Text archives (archive)

frequency (period): weekly (week)
access right (access): owner (owner)

frequency

weekly (week)
daily (day)
monthly (month)
quarterly (quarter)
yearly (year)

access right

owner (owner)
closed (closed)
open (open)
subscribers only (private)
public (public)
Owner – FAQs

Shared Documents

• Each list has a shared document space available through the web.
  – default, can be deactivated by list Owner
• Owners define access permission scheme
• Each document has access control
  – read, edit, control
• Shared Docs can be used for files over the 10mb email size limit
• All files are stored (renamed) to lower case to prevent name collisions.
  – Shared Docs is NOT case sensitive
Owner – FAQs

Shared Documents - access

• Document access rights
  – Read
    • Open directories
    • View contents
  – Edit
    • Create subdirectories
    • Upload
    • Unzip
    • Edit doc and directory descriptions
    • Delete docs or directories
  – Control
    • List owner and doc contributors define who has read or edit permission
      – Per directory or per doc
Owner – FAQs

Shared Documents - create

• Owner defines read/write permissions
  – (Admin) > Edit List Config > Privileges

• Read
• Write

• Permissions for root and subdirectories
Owner – FAQs

Shared Documents – create

- Members access
- Shared documents (left menu)
  - User Mode (read)
    - Shows contents of shared document space
  - Expert mode (edit)
    - Click [Expert mode] to upload or create directories
    - Create new sub-directory
      - Enter name, click Create.
Owner – FAQs

Shared Documents - create

- Creator or Owner define permissions to sub-folders.
- Change read/edit permissions on folder
  - Select access
  - Select desired permissions for read / edit access
  - Select (change access) to save
- A URL to a shared folder is available to authorized members via the web
  - https://lists.illinois.edu/lists/d_read/listName/subFolderName
  - E.g. https://lists.illinois.edu/lists/d_read/sympa-owners/
Sympa Features
Custom Footer - Unsubscribe

• Click (Admin) > Customizing > Message footer:

• Add the following message with variables will create an unsubscribe link at the bottom of each message.

To unsubscribe from [%listname%], click or copy and paste this link into a browser:
[%wwsympa_url%]/auto_signoff/[%listname%]/[%user.escaped_email%]

• The result will generate a unique link for each member of the list point them to the unsubscribe option.

To unsubscribe from testList, click or copy and paste this link into a browser:
https://lists-dev.cites.illinois.edu/lists/auto_signoff/testList/tmclaren%40illinois.edu

• Click or copy and paste is based on a list owners choice of how to attach the footer to the email messages:
  – Append or MIME attachment
Sympa Features
Footer Types

• The list owner can change how the footer is attached to each mail message. (default is MIME)

• Email clients treat appended vs mime differently.
  – Append to Message body
    • Outlook embeds link in message body
    • Gmail & yahoo do not
  – New MIME Part
    • Outlook created an attachment
    • Gmail & Yahoo embed a link in the message body

• Privileged owners setting
  – (Admin) > Edit List Config > Sending/Receiving Setup
Sympa Features

DMARC

- DMARC (Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting & Conformance)
  - Yahoo! and AOL increased their DKIM validation
    - "p=reject" for any emails that originate From its' domain to its' domain in an effort to prevent Domain-to-domain spam.
  - Broke most lists for Yahoo! and AOL users
  - List Config to change From address to:
    - Name, email via List

From: "John Doe johndoe@illinois.edu via listName@lists.illinois.edu <listName@lists.illinois.edu>"
Sympa Features
DMARC

• Changing (Admin) > Edit List Config > DKIM

– Default setting generate

From: "John Doe johndoe@illinois.edu via listName@lists.illinois.edu <listName@lists.illinois.edu>"
Sympa Features

DKIM - Roadmap

• DKIM (DomainKeys Identified Mail)
  – A cryptographic signature to validate domain names
  – Designed to prevent spoofing, phishing, spam, etc...

• When enabled
  – Sympa will check DKIM status of incoming messages
    • Reject incoming message that fail DKIM check
  – Apply a DKIM signature to outgoing messages

• Currently disabled
  – Possible DKIM policy enforcement on this service and on the Campus Email Relays is currently being reviewed.
    • It’s unclear if we need this added level of security (yet)
    • Evaluating feature impact (performance, costs, etc...)
Sympa Feature

SOAP - Roadmap

• Uses same authorization rules as email and web interfaces
• Provides a remote API to a subset of Sympa functions
  – Command-line & trusted application
• Status
  – Testing the interface & Reviewing sympa.wsdl
Notable Questions

1. Can anyone copy a list?
   A. You have to be an owner of the list you are attempting to copy.

2. How do you verify/locate inactive lists?
   A. A good indication is located at Sympa admin tab, List tab, and Lists sorted by last message date button.

3. Can users subscribe to subset of distributed message?
   A. Yes. Topics for message categorization (msg_topic).

4. How do you perform multiple user deletions?
   A. Select the maximum page size and click the toggle selection (<< >>), which will select the entire page length of subscribers. The maximum page size (list of subscribers) is 500.

5. Why am I not able to delete a subscriber(s)?
   A. Navigate to Edit List Config, Privileges, Who can delete subscribers (del) (default), and verify scenario.
(cont.) Notable Questions

6. Are all moderators required to approve moderated messages?
   A. No. If the list is moderated, any editor can distribute or reject a message without the knowledge or consent of the other editors/moderators.

7. Is there a deadline for a message moderation?
   A. Default is 30 days. Editable at Admin, Edit List Config, Miscellaneous, Expiration of un-moderated messages (clean_delay_queuemod).

8. Is it possible to send messages to a mailing list without having subscribed to it?
   A. Yes. However, you need to be subscribed to a list to receive its messages.

9. Can list owners and/or editors configure data sources?
   A. No; only list masters.
Data sources feature

• Sympa allows the mailing list manager to choose how Sympa loads subscriber and administrative data.

• User information can be stored in a text or relational database, or included from various external sources (list, flat file, result of LDAP or SQL query).
  ✓ include_list
  ✓ include_remote_file
Sympa FAQ

Data Source Example – List Inclusion

• (Admin) > Edit List Config > Data sources setup

• Including lists here eliminate duplication of email
Sympa FAQ
Data Source Example - Remote File Inclusion

• (Admin) > Edit List Config > Data sources setup

• Used for auto-populate a user list
Campus Mail list
Service Roadmap

• Roadmap
  – SOAP Interface (Test & Doc)
  – Possible DKIM enforcement
  – Service policies review
  – Service requirements project
    • Community driven (need your input)
  – Documentation upgrades
Campus Mail list

References

• Contacts
  – Mail lists users - The List owners for that list
  – List Owners - listmgr@Illinois.edu for list owner support and general questions
  – sympa-owners mail list – community support & archive reference
    • sympa-owners@lists.Illinois.edu
  – sympa-owners shared docs – reference docs
    • https://lists.illinois.edu/lists/d_read/sympa-owners/

• References
  – CITES Docs:
    • http://www.cites.illinois.edu/maillist/index.html
  – Sympa 6.1.23 Reference Manual:
    • http://www.sympa.org/manual_6.1/