



Effective Use of the Internet for Mainframe Problem Solving

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Session 17318

#SHAREorg



SHARE is an independent volunteer-run information technology association that provides **education, professional networking and industry influence.**



What is covered in this presentation

- Ever wonder what is out in the internet for Mainframe?
- Ever wonder why the posting you made is not getting any responses?
- Ever wonder how to create a posting that attracts responses?
- This session will cover these answers and more
- This only covers general internet lists and does not cover vendor specific lists like CA Communities

Overview of Session

- How to find lists
- How to sign on and off lists
- How to create an effective posting
- How to craft Subject Lines
- Body of the Message
- Hijacking Threads and Clutter
- Guidelines for Postings
- Watch the Wrap (or using TINYURLs)
- How to search for Information
- Purpose of these lists
- List of Lists
- Q&A

How to find lists

How do I know what is on the Internet for Mainframe?

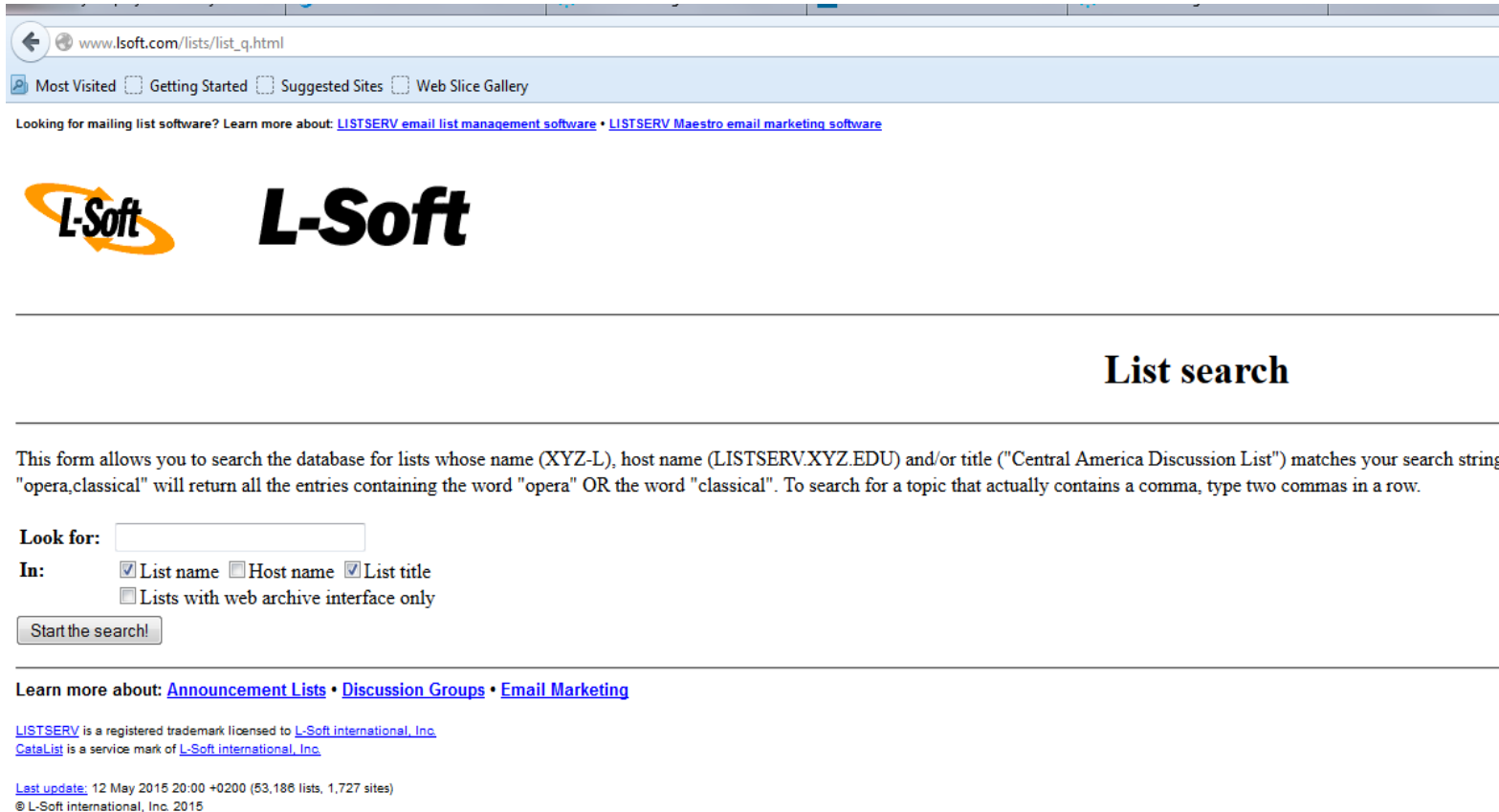
- Doing basic internet searches on the topic
- Asking a coworker if they know of any lists
- Most z/OS functions may have a specific list
- When in-doubt – Ask IBMMAIN
- Next slide is the master list server search function

Examples of Mainframe Lists

- TCPIP/VTAM
- TSO/REXX
- CICS
- DB2
- Unix
- Linux
- MQ
- z/VM
- SAS
- MXG

Master LSOFT List Server

- http://www.lsoft.com/lists/list_q.html



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL www.lsoft.com/lists/list_q.html. Below the address bar, there are navigation links: Most Visited, Getting Started, Suggested Sites, and Web Slice Gallery. A text link reads: "Looking for mailing list software? Learn more about: [LISTSERV email list management software](#) • [LISTSERV Maestro email marketing software](#)". The L-Soft logo is prominently displayed. The main heading is "List search". Below this, a paragraph explains the search form: "This form allows you to search the database for lists whose name (XYZ-L), host name (LISTSERV.XYZ.EDU) and/or title ("Central America Discussion List") matches your search string. "opera,classical" will return all the entries containing the word "opera" OR the word "classical". To search for a topic that actually contains a comma, type two commas in a row." The search form includes a "Look for:" text input field, an "In:" section with checkboxes for "List name", "Host name", "List title", and "Lists with web archive interface only", and a "Start the search!" button. At the bottom, there are links for "Announcement Lists", "Discussion Groups", and "Email Marketing". Footer text includes: "LISTSERV is a registered trademark licensed to L-Soft international, Inc. CataList is a service mark of L-Soft international, Inc. Last update: 12 May 2015 20:00 +0200 (53,186 lists, 1,727 sites) © L-Soft international, Inc. 2015".

Basics of a List

- LISTSERV is the original and industry standard email list management software.
- Not all List servers run the most current version of this software
- You can sign onto lists either via EMAIL or a GUI from a URL.
- If you have questions, always send an email to the List Owners. They are there to help.

Who has Lists?

- BMC
- IBM
- UGA
- UARK
- Marist College

How to Subscribe/UnSubscribe

- Send to the ListServer - Do not send to the List
- When a posting is sent through the list it will typically have the instructions at the bottom

– **DB2 Example (at the bottom of all postings):**

Site Links: [View post online](#) [View mailing list online](#) [Start new thread via email](#) [Unsubscribe from this mailing list](#) [Manage your subscription](#)

** ** IDUG DB2 Tech Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA 2015 ** **

---> Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, 4 - 8 May, 2015 <---

<http://www.idug.org/p/cm/ld/fid=551>

Use of this email content is governed by the terms of service at:

<http://www.idug.org/p/cm/ld/fid=2>

IBMMAIN Example (at the bottom of all postings):

For IBM-MAIN subscribe / signoff / archive access instructions, send email to listserv@listserv.ua.edu with the message: INFO IBM-MAIN

- Accessing the URL for the list will sometimes have a GUI interface to allow the subscribe/unsubscribe process

Screen Shot from UGA – General Lists

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Help for LISTSERV Archives
UGA Help Desk
Request a List

Subscriber's Corner Email Lists Log In



LISTSERV.UGA.EDU

This LISTSERV server is located at LISTSERV.UGA.EDU. Below you will find all lists that have been configured for public archiving. To access a specific list, simply click on the name of the list in the table. To find confidential or unlisted lists, type in the list name in the search box to the right. For lists that have been configured with an HTML description, you can get more information about the list by hovering the mouse over the list name.

[3-ARTS][ARTS-COE][COM-ET][EV-GEO][GER-IP][IR-NA][NE-SCC][SCE-TO][TR-USG-][USG-Y] [Next]

List Name	List Title
3DUGA	3D Printing at UGA (25 Subscribers)
AAPTSA	AAPT - Southern Atlantic Section (165 Subscribers)
ABBS-L	Athens Boy Band Society (2 Subscribers)
ABOUT-SCULPTURE	Info about UGA Sculpture Area (19 Subscribers)
ACA-L	Arab Cultural Association (338 Subscribers)
ACCLIBRARY-L	ACC Library News and Events (7467 Subscribers)
ACIT	Info Technology Committee (0 Subscribers)
ACM-ICPC	Programming Competition (45 Subscribers)
ACTIVEMINDSUGA	Active Minds at UGA (271 Subscribers)
ADMIN-MEMOS	Admin Memos (375 Subscribers)
ADOBE-INFO-L	USG Adobe News & Product Info (72 Subscribers)

Access Unlisted Lists

Options

Log In

Get Password

Search Archives

Resources

About LISTSERV

LISTSERV Documentation

Screen Shot from UGA – Sign-on to a List



[Subscriber's Corner](#) [Email Lists](#)



Subscribe or Unsubscribe to the ASSEMBLER-LIST List

ASSEMBLER-LIST@LISTSERV.UGA.EDU

This screen allows you to subscribe or unsubscribe to the ASSEMBLER-LIST list. To confirm your identity and prevent third parties from subscribing you to a list against your will, an email message with a confirmation code will be sent to the address you specify. Simply wait for this message to arrive, then follow the instructions to confirm the operation.

Alternatively, you can update your subscription interactively by [logging in with your LISTSERV password](#).

Name:

Email Address:

Select List:

Subscription Type

Regular [NODIGEST]

Digest (traditional) [NOMIME DIGEST]

LISTSERV.UGA.EDU

Complete your session evaluations online at www.SHARE.org/Orlando-Eval

1/19/2016

How to create an effective posting

- Use good subject lines.
 - Many readers have limited time to look at postings, the better the subject line the more likely they will look and respond
- Do not Hijack a thread
- Do not use all caps
- Many lists use plain text - Check before you send you are using the correct format
- Include details you would need if you were looking at it
- Cross post to multiple lists if you are not sure where it belongs
 - Cross posting can be helpful. If a post is done one list at a time, then the threads can get confused. And answers lost

How to create an effective posting

- A list is not a helpdesk. People on these lists have jobs and will respond when they can. It is also international, be aware of how you communicate
 - If you do not get an answer in 20 secs it might be the list participants have not had time to look at it or are busy with their jobs.
 - The Subject line or details in the posting are not sufficient
 - It is better to not repost the question. Instead go to the list URL and see if your posting has gotten into the archives.
 - No one is required to answer your posting.

How to create an effective posting

- Some people subscribe to the digest form. If your subject line is too vague, it may not be looked at.
- Some people subscribe with NOMAIL but monitor through a google list
- Subject lines can be fairly long. It is better to make it something people want to read
 - Do not use unclear short subjects
 - Examples
 - QUESTION
 - HELP
 - LIKE TABS
 - URGENT
 - CANT IPL

How to create an effective posting

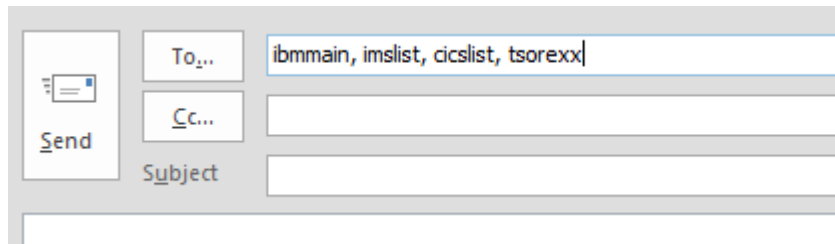
- Make clear subject lines
 - Examples
 - z/OS will not IPL after maint
 - DB2 Table is in STOPP status – How do I correct it
 - Question – How to code an Assembler macro without using LABELS
 - Questions – How can I setup RMM to automatically recycle tapes
- Subject lines should use Upper and Lower case or all Lower case. Using all UPPER CASE is considered shouting
- A link to more detail on posting to lists
 - <http://www.catb.org/~esr/faqs/smart-questions.html>

Body of the Message

- Write enough information to explain the question or problem.
 - You can state it is for a class project
 - You can state you are new to the topic
 - You can state you have not done this in a long time
- The more details provided, the better the answers.
 - When browsing the archives for information – a thread can take a while to get to the problem/question. The quickest way to a good answer is to give enough details
- Target the correct List. Sometimes it is easier to just post to the list you are familiar. However, that means you may not be posting to the best group.

Body of the Message

- Cross Posting
 - When posting to multiple lists, use a CROSS POST
 - To Cross post add multiple lists to the TO in the email



The image shows a screenshot of an email composition interface. On the left, there is a 'Send' button with a paper plane icon. To the right of the 'Send' button are three input fields: 'To...', 'Cc...', and 'Subject'. The 'To...' field contains the text 'ibmmain, imslis, cicslist, tsorex'. The 'Cc...' and 'Subject' fields are currently empty.

- Nice to have is a first line in the body of the text that states
CROSS POSTING TO (list the groups)
A REPLY ALL would then go to all groups posted to.
- A reason to CROSS post is to broaden the audience for the question you are asking. This can sometimes be helpful when you are unsure where your post should go.

Body of the Message

- Target the correct List. Sometimes it is easier to just post to the list you are familiar. However, that means you may not be posting to the best group.
 - Example
 - Posted to the CICS List
 - I know this is not the correct list, but does anyone have a SAS program that can create a report for a MIPS chart?
 - Better group(s)
 - » MXG This group discusses all things with SAS and MXG. They will likely have the best answers.
 - » MICS. They are a performance specific community. They can probably help with the coding.
 - » IBMMAIN They are a general group and many have this type of knowledge

Body of the Message

- Example
 - Posted to the ISPF List
 - Can anyone help me determine why my ISFEXEC process is not returning the right data?
 - Better Group
 - If REXX based – TSO-REXX
 - If other – IBMMAIN
 - Reason: ISPF is an application that lots of products can run under. This does not mean that ISPF can answer questions about SDSF, RMF, ESP or other products that can be invoked under ISPF.

Body of the Message

- Supply the relevant points to your question/problem. By using examples that do not fit, the list will provide advise that may not be good for your question/problem.
- At some point you will need to do the work. The list can only provide guidance. It cannot tell you how do to it in your shop.
- The List does not have access to your system. So any information provided by the list is ASIS. And YMMV. You need to understand the information before taking any action in your Shop
 - Make sure you have good backups before trying any suggestions.

Body of the Message

- Make sure you have a test environment to try it first.
 - Never do things in a live system
 - If you do not understand – ask for clarification.
 - Make your own Check lists based on the advise offered.
 - You will probably run into this issue again in the future
 - Advise by the list is based on experience and trial and error.
-
- If the list provides advise and you take it and it breaks something – Remember this is only advise and guidance. It does not replace the support that comes from a vendor or knowledge of the configuration of your shop.

Highjacking Threads and Clutter

- Do not high jack threads. It will create chaos when trying to search the archives.
 - What is a HIGHJACKED thread?
 - Using REPLY TO instead of starting a new thread.
 - Sometimes when people do not know how to post they will take a previous posting, do a REPLY TO, and then do their own Subject. They do not remove the RE: from the subject so others could expect there was another post that started it. This can lead to an hour or so of looking for the original posting.
 - Once a thread is started, it can go in different directions due to “chatter” or what I like to call Clutter

Highjacking Threads and Clutter

- Chatter is responding to some posting with information not relevant to the original posting.
 - Some who reply will remind us of other events or history that do not help with the original posting.
 - Instead, start a new thread for the history of how it was
 - Instead, start a new thread using a replacement subject line. By do this you provide the reader a way to find the original posting without cluttering the thread
 - » Example
 - » Original Subject:
- How to Code a Cobol Perform Paragraph
 - » Replacement Subject:
- OS VSII Cobol Coding (Was How to Code a Cobol Perform Paragraph)

Highjacking Threads and Clutter

- Sometimes personalities will emerge. Try to remember this is a public list. Be polite. Your boss may be reading these lists as well.
 - If someone says something that makes you happy, sad, angry, joyful, etc... you can always send that person a private note, rather than sending to the list.
- Remember this is an international list. Use words and phrases easily translated by Babble fish, free translation, etc...
 - When you use idioms, or words that a lot of people do not use, try to rephrase for others.
 - English may not be the posters native language.

Subject Line Examples

- This list shows good and bad subject lines. QUIZ
- Select A (Acceptable Subject line) or NA (Not Acceptable Subject Line)
 - A or NA Subject: HELP
 - A or NA Subject: Urgent Request
 - A or NA Subject: S0C4 in Module LEX0001
 - A or NA Subject: Can't IPL
 - A or NA Subject: SMP/E version in z/OS 1.4
 - A or NA Subject: Abend S602-04 when in AMODE 64
 - A or NA Subject: USERID
- A subject line should make the reader want to open the posting. Sometimes there are really interesting postings that are ignored due to a poorly crafted subject line.

How to search for Information

- Most lists have archives. You can search in them to see if there were any discussions on what you are trying to understand.
- Sometimes you need to go on a vendor list to see if their support area has information.
- Sometimes Lists will point you to places to go find information.
- Sometimes response will be for mentoring rather than telling you what to do.
- When you resolve your issue, it is helpful to let the list know the solution so it is in the archives for others

Guidelines for Postings

- Include sufficient information for someone else to look at.
 - The list does not have access to your shop or the areas where they would normally look.
 - Include complete error messages. You can remove company specific information. Do not just include the error message or abend code
- Say what you have looked at so far.
 - Have you looked at certain manuals
 - Have you done any internet searches
 - What have you reviewed and why you think they do not match your issue
 - Have you contacted the vendor. A list is not a replacement for Vendor Support.
 - If you are new to the area you are asking about, it is okay to say “I am new to this area” or “I have not done this in a long time”. Lists are very helpful when they know your level of experience

Watch the Wrap

- When adding links – they will sometimes wrap
<http://gizmodo.com/ibms-hulking-new-mainframe-will-help-you-shop-1679413722>
- If the link is long, you can go to www.tinyurl.com
This website takes long URLs and shortens them

TinyURL.com

Making over a billion long URLs usable! Serving billions of redirects per month.

- [Home](#)
- [Example](#)
- [Make Toolbar Button](#)
- [Redirection](#)
- [Hide URLs](#)
- [Preview Feature^{cool!}](#)
- [Link to Us!](#)
- [Terms of use](#)
- [Contact Us!](#)

DONATE



TinyURL was created!

The following URL:
<http://gizmodo.com/ibms-hulking-new-mainframe-will-help-you-shop-1679413722>

has a length of 75 characters and resulted in the following TinyURL which has a length of 26 characters:

<http://tinyurl.com/lg33uhc>
[\[Open in new window\]](#) [\[Copy to clipboard\]](#)

Or, give your recipients confidence with a preview TinyURL:

<http://preview.tinyurl.com/lg33uhc>
[\[Open in new window\]](#)

Enter another long URL to make tiny:

Custom alias (optional):
<http://tinyurl.com/>
May contain letters, numbers, and dashes.

Purpose of these lists

- The lists are more like a bunch of friends over drinks discussing various aspects of the mainframe. There is a lot of wisdom that will be gladly shared.
- The lists do not replace the vendor support functions.
- The lists do not replace training. They supplement training.
- If you want a more in-depth explanation of a function in z/OS or are new to something and do not understand it, this is the place to go.
- If you have homework and need assistance, just post it. But it is helpful if you state “This is a classroom problem that I do not understand.”
- Lists are like a group of extraordinary Mentors. Sometimes you will get answers that make you do homework

Mainframe List of Lists

Newsgroup Name	URL
CICS	http://www.listserv.uga.edu/archives/cics-l.html
DB2	http://www.idug.org/
General MVS IBM-Main	https://listserv.ua.edu/archives/ibm-main.html
IBM Assembler	https://listserv.uga.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=ASSEMBLER-LIST&A=1
IMS	http://imslistserv.bmc.com/SCRIPTS/WA-BMC.EXE?SUBED1=IMS-L&A=1
ISPF	https://listserv.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=ispf-l
JES2	http://listserv.vt.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=jes2-l
JES3	http://www.listserv.uga.edu/archives/jes3-l.html
Linux	http://www2.marist.edu/htbin/wlvindex?LINUX-VM
MQ	https://listserv.meduniwien.ac.at/archives/mqser-l.html
MVS OE	http://vm.marist.edu/archives/mvs-oe.html
MVS-UTIL	http://www2.marist.edu/htbin/wlvindex?MVS-UTIL
Netview	http://vm.marist.edu/archives/netv-l.html
RACF	http://www.listserv.uga.edu/archives/racf-l.html
SAS	http://vm.marist.edu/archives/sas-l.html

Mainframe List of Lists Part 2

Newsgroup Name	URL
TCPIP	Or this url and go to the bottom of the webpage: http://www2.marist.edu/htbin/wlvindex?IBMTCP-L
TSO REXX	http://www2.marist.edu/htbin/wlvindex?TSO-REXX
VM REXX	http://vm.marist.edu/archives/vm-rexx.html
VM Util	http://vm.marist.edu/archives/vm-util.html
zOS Skill	http://www2.marist.edu/htbin/wlvindex?ZOS-SKIL
z/VM	http://listserv.uark.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=IBMVM
Other Lists at Marist College	http://www.lsoft.com/scripts/wl.exe?XH=VM.MARIST.EDU
Other Lists at Univ of Alabama	https://listserv.ua.edu/cgi-bin/wa?INDEX
Other Lists at University of Arkansas	http://www.lsoft.com/scripts/wl.exe?XH=LISTSERV.UARK.EDU
Other Lists at University of Georgia	http://www.listserv.uga.edu/archives/
Misc Documents	http://www.vm.ibm.com/techinfo/listserv.html

Q&A



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