USING THE OER-FORUM MAILING LIST

Contents

1.   What is a mailing list?

A mailing list is simply a list of e-mail addresses to which the same information is being sent. For example, if you were a magazine publisher, you would have a list of the mailing addresses of all the subscribers to the magazine. In the case of an electronic mailing list, we use a list of e-mail addresses from people interested in hearing about or discussing a given topic.

2.   What is a moderated mailing list?

The *oer-forum* mailing list is set up as a moderated discussion list allowing a group of people to discuss topics amongst themselves, with everyone able to send mail to the list and have it distributed to everyone in the group. The discussion will be moderated. All relevant postings to the mailing list will be approved. Postings that are not relevant to the discussion topic will be rejected by the moderator. The reason for doing this is to reduce the number of messages that people will receive during the course of the discussion.

The list is also moderated to protect list members from spam messages that might be sent from members or non-members. The moderator will reject these messages preventing them from reaching you.

3.   Who belongs to this mailing list?

Members of the Commonwealth of Learning mailing list, members of the OER Community mailing list (maintained by UNESCO), as well as those persons that attended the OER workshops in Cape Town and Windhoek have all been invited to subscribe to the list.

Non-members are not permitted to post to the list. So vendors and persons with other motives are barred from posting to the list.

Currently the list is set up so that, with the exception of the list administrator, no member or non-member can see who is subscribed to the list. This is done so as to improve security of your subscription details.

4. **Does the forum subscribe to an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)?**

This OER Forum is provided as a space where the OER Community can collaborate and discuss issues related to the use of OERs in higher education. As an online community, Users are requested to respect the rights of other Users.

The AUP includes issues around general behaviour, use of language, breach of confidence, breach of intellectual property, impersonation, viruses, illegal and harmful activities, pornography, personal data and permitted use.

A copy of the AUP can be requested from oer-forum-owner@lists.esn.org.za

5. **How do I post a new message to the OER-Forum mailing list/start a new thread?**

Using your normal e-mail client (e.g. MS Outlook or Thunderbird) simply send your message to oer-forum@lists.esn.org.za .

It is suggested that you use an appropriate comment in the Subject:-line so that people wishing to follow specific subjects can easily do so.

If you wish to start a new discussion thread (e.g. a point that has not so far been raised in the discussion) then use a new Subject:-line that has not previously been used and clearly identifies what the discussion point will be. In other words do not start a new discussion thread using an existing Subject:-line as this will confuse readers.

6. **How do I respond to a message that someone else has posted/continue with a thread?**

Here you need to differentiate between sending a personal response to the originator of the message or a global response that you want sent to the mailing list.

- For an individual personal response simply click on **"Reply"** and the e-mail address of the original sender of the message should appear. You then type your response in the body of the e-mail and click Send when you are ready to send.

- For a global response simply click on **"Reply to All"**. You should see both the e-mail address of the originator of the message and the e-mail address of the mailing list. You can delete the e-mail address of the originator as he/she will get the reply via the mailing list. You then type your response in the body of the e-mail and click Send when you are ready to send.

7. **Can I post attachments to the mailing list?**

Documents can be attached to any message sent to the mailing list. However, the attachment size is restricted to 50 KB. This restriction is primarily to reduce network traffic and mail in individual mailboxes.

Before attaching documents to a message check the size of the file. If it exceeds 50 KB then it is not likely to be passed to the list members by the moderator.

8. How do I change my mailing list options?

The mailing list has a number of options which members can change individually. These include the following:

- Digest option: When the 'digest' option is turned off, you will receive postings immediately they are posted. When the 'digest' option is turned on you will receive the postings bundled into a plain text digest delivered on a daily or weekly basis.

- Delivery option: When the Delivery option is off it tells the mailing list not to deliver messages to you for now. This is useful if you're going on vacation. Be sure to use 'set delivery on' when you return from vacation!

- Discussion option: this allows you to select which of the forum discussions you wish to participate in. The default value is all discussions so if you do not wish to participate in some of the discussion you will need to deselect the relevant discussion.

- Unsubscribe option: this allows you to unsubscribe yourself from the list.

It is suggested that unless you have a very good reason for changing an option that you leave the default options as set. If, however you wish to change the options point your browser at http://lists.esn.org.za/mailman/options/oer-forum. You will be asked for the e-mail address and password you used when subscribing. Once into the site you will be able to change various options. Remember to click on "*Submit My Changes*" right at the bottom of the page otherwise the changes will not be registered.

9. How do I view the list archives?

All messages sent to the list are automatically archived and can be accessed by any list member at any time. The messages will be archived per month.

Point your web browser to http://lists.esn.org.za/pipermail/oer-forum/ In order to access the archive you will need the e-mail address you used to subscribe and the password you selected when subscribing.

Once into the archive you will see the following:

The OER-forum Archives

You can get more information about this list.

Archive	View by:	Downloadable version
September 2010:	[Thread] [Subject] [Author] [Date]	[Text 3 KB]
June 2010:	[Thread] [Subject] [Author] [Date]	[Gzip'd Text 346 bytes]

You can view the messages by Thread, by Subject, by Author or by Date by simply clicking on the appropriate word. A list of all the messages posted to the list in that month will then be displayed.

To **read** a specific message you merely click on the message and it will open. You cannot respond to any messages/threads from here. If you wish to **respond** to a specific message in the archive you will need to start a new message (see section 5 above) and you should use exactly the same subject line as contained in the original message.

10. Managing ourselves

We can improve the efficiency of the interaction if we follow some simple guidelines.

- To reduce the number of messages, send contributions to the discussion but not comments, such as, "I agree".

- When you put an 'Out of the office' message on your e-mail address, let the list manager know (see below for address) and, if you wish, he will temporarily disable your address on the mailing list. When you return let him know and your address will be re-instated.

- It is easiest to hit the Reply button on a message when you want to write to the community, BUT do make sure the subject line reflects the subject you are addressing. If we pay attention to this, the discussion threads in the archives will organize the messages in a meaningful way.

- If you hit Reply, remove the text of some of the earlier messages to prevent messages from growing long "tails".

11. Who do I turn to if all else fails?

Should you have any queries regarding any aspect of the mailing list please feel free to send an e-mail to oer-forum-owner@lists.esn.org.za