



The Gigaphone

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The Shouting Ground Newsletter

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From the Cubicle of the President:

(E-)MAILING LISTS

So you've got that web-page up, but perhaps you'd like to have other ways to distribute information about your company or its activities. One way to do this is through the use of mailing lists. Mailing lists can be a very handy way to distribute information to those who perhaps don't have the time to browse web-sites, but are still heavily dependent on E-mail and staying informed. They are also more private than web-sites, since only members on the list will get your message. A company might wish to let their customers know about a weekly or monthly special, a rate change, or perhaps just a heads-up on things to come. E-mail is a great way to distribute such information, as long as you do it in a non-intrusive fashion.

Mailing Lists through your E-mail Software

Probably the simplest way to set up a mailing list is to create a list of addresses in your favorite E-mail client (e.g., Eudora, Netscape Mail, or Outlook.) Most of these applications allow you to add entries to an Addressbook, which can contain one or more recipient addresses. When sending a message, make sure to use the Blind Carbon Copy (Bcc:) line, usually presented as a line underneath the "To:" and "Cc:" lines. This prevents your clients from seeing the list of recipients in the E-mail message. You wouldn't want that kind of information to be sent to a potential competitor, and it is also considerate of your recipients: they probably don't want to see a big long list of E-mail addresses in the message anyway.

This type of mailing list is fine for smaller lists, but for a larger distribution it can become unwieldy. You will have to honor requests from members to be removed or added from the list by hand. Also, you will be the only one able to submit messages to the list.

Majordomo

A far more sophisticated way of administering a mailing list is to use something like Majordomo (also sometimes referred to as a LISTSERV.) Majordomo can handle all of the above, but it also can let users subscribe and unsubscribe themselves without your intervention. You can also allow more than one person to submit messages to the list. Majordomo lists can be configured as "moderated" or "unmoderated". In the former case, the "list owner" must approve all messages posted to the mailing list. Unmoderated lists, on the other hand, can be posted to by anyone. Clearly this offers a lot more flexibility than the simple example above using your E-mail client's Addressbook. This extra flexibility does require that the list be kept on a server somewhere, typically on one owned by your ISP. If you or your company is interested in hosting a Majordomo mailing list, please contact us for details at 217-351-7921 or E-mail admin@shout.net.

Mailing List Tips

There are a couple of things to remember when setting up your mailing list. One of the more obvious ones is to make sure you aren't contributing to any unwanted E-mail. "Spam", as it's more commonly known by, is ubiquitous on the Internet. Therefore it is extremely important to respect your mailing list recipients and their mailboxes. Never add someone to your mailing list who does not want to be on it. Not only will you hear about it from them in an unpleasant manner, but it's also against many ISP's (including Shouting Ground's) Acceptable Usage Policy. See our usage policy at <http://www.shout.net/services/policy.html> for details.

It is also a good idea to keep your messages short and to the point. Remember that your recipients will not all be using the same E-mail client that you use. Try not to send large attachments or use special formatting that might not work for all. Stick to just text, and if you use a signature, keep it short and simple. You can always reference your web-page if you want to offer more detailed information to the interested party.

In conclusion, mailing lists can be a great avenue for disseminating information to a select number of people. You can create a simple mailing list in most E-mail clients -- handy for keeping family members and/or friends up-to-date on what you're doing. On a bigger scale, keep your company's clients informed of updates or specials with a short announcement. Let us know if you have any questions or would like further information on the subject.

Understanding Your Billing

As a customer of Shouting Ground Technologies, every month you will receive an INVOICE from us detailing your services for that particular month. The word INVOICE will be visible in the upper right hand corner. The Invoice number will be in a box right below that. The due date will be in a box half-way down the page, and the total for that month's services will be listed in the bottom right hand corner.

If you have over-paid us (intentionally or otherwise) or have neglected to pay us, you will also receive a STATEMENT from us, as well as an Invoice. The STATEMENT (noted in bold in the upper right hand corner) is a listing of your account's recent activity (usually six months' worth). The STATEMENT will show all Invoices and payments for that period. At the bottom right hand corner will be the total you actually owe. If the number is negative, that means you have overpaid and have credit with us. The STATEMENT is on light blue paper. When in doubt, pay the amount on the STATEMENT.

If you ever have any questions about your INVOICE or STATEMENT, feel free to call us at 217-351-7921 and ask for Jeff or e-mail <billing@shout.net>.

One Liners

If you're trying to get along with just one phone line, we have some items that might make life a little easier.

- Secure your phone line with our "privacy switch". If you're using your modem or fax machine, it prevents the call from being interrupted when an extension phone is taken off-hook. One is needed for each extension. If your phone and modem are connected at the same location, a two-jack model is available. When one device is in use, the other cannot interrupt the call.

<i>Single Jack Privacy Switch</i>	\$ 10.00
<i>Double Jack Privacy Switch</i>	\$ 12.00

- Avoid unwanted call-waiting interruptions without missing phone calls. You can disable your call-waiting service and prevent your modem from hanging up when a call comes in, but if you're expecting an important call, you don't want to miss it. The Hotcall Call Waiting Switch notifies you that you have an incoming call without interrupting your Internet connection. You can choose to accept it (and drop the Internet connection) or ignore it. If you have call-waiting and caller-ID, you'll know who's calling even when you're on-line.

<i>Hotcall Call-Waiting Switch</i>	\$ 75.00
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We have other handy phone accessories available, such as toll call eliminators that prevent long-distance calls from being made on your line and programmable phone jacks to prohibit calls at certain times (911 calls are always passed through). Contact us for details.

Grandma Metcalf's Toffee Bars

1 cup butter or margarine
1 cup brown sugar
1 tsp vanilla
2 cups sifted all purpose flour
1 6-oz package (1cup) semi-sweet chocolate pieces
1 cups chopped walnuts or pecans

Thoroughly cream together butter, sugar, and vanilla. Add flour, mix well. Stir in chocolate and walnuts. Press mixture into ungreased 15½ x 10½ x 1 inch jelly roll pan.

Bake 25 minutes at 350F or until browned. While still warm, cut in bars or squares. Cool before removing from pan. Makes 5 dozen.