Mail2News Mini−Howto

Table of Contents

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Bek Oberin `gossamer@tertius.net.au`

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This document describes how to set up your news server and the mail2news software to link mailing lists to local news groups.

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1. Copyright and such

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2. Introduction

Why would you want to post mailing list traffic to local news groups?

Should more than one user subscribe to the same mailing list, there is going to be traffic duplication. By subscribing the site to a list (if this is allowed by the list owner) and 'gating' the email traffic to the local news server, it is possible to make mailing lists accessible to all site users, or, using the security features of 'innd', to limit the access to certain users. Such a site subscription (particularly if there are a number of high traffic lists) can make worthwhile savings in bandwidth usage.

Also, reading list traffic via a newsreader offers the advantages of threading and scoring/killfiles which tend not to be available in all mailreaders. And, of course, it keeps your inbox free free for possibly more urgent, personal email.

This mini−HOWTO describes setting up the 'mail2news' script to accomplish this.

2.1 Finding mail2news

You can download the mail2news package including the script and this HOWTO and other documentation from

```
http://www.tertius.net.au/~gossamer/code/mail2news/
```

3. Overview of the system

It is probably easiest to understand how this system works by tracking a message from the mailing list to the newsgroup and then a message posted to the local newsgroup (and gated to the mailing list) and see how they are handled.

3.1 Mail from the mailing list

When mail from the mailing list arrives at the local machine, procmail figures out what newsgroup it belongs in, and pipes the incoming message to mail2news.

The mail2news script processes the message, applying news headers and then uses rnews or inews to post the message to the newsgroup.

3.2 Messages posted to the local newsgroup

The local newsgroup is set up as a moderated group, as this allows us to take advantage of the email capabilities of innd. Any messages posted to a moderated group are not immediately submitted to the group. Instead, messages are emailed to the moderator of the group.

By declaring the moderator of the local newsgroup to be mailing list address, all locally posted messages to the newsgroup are automatically mailed out to the mailing list by innd and only appear once they have been received back through mail2news which adds the necessary 'approved' line to the messages and are thus acceptable to innd for posting to the newsgroup.

4. Setting up mail2news

Put the mail2news script in a suitable location. I favour /usr/local/bin, but the location is up to you.

You will need to edit script as follows:−

- At the top of the script, make sure you are pointing at the local Perl binary. You can probably find out where Perl is by typing 'whereis perl' or 'which perl' at a command prompt. If you can't find it, /usr/bin/perl is the safest bet:

```
#!/usr/bin/perl
# point at the correct location of perl
```

- Edit the following lines to point at the posting program (I use rnews, inews will work too) and your news host:

```
# $inews = "/usr/bin/inews";
# $iopts = "-h -o \"mail2news gateway\"";
$inews = "/usr/bin/rnews";
$iopts = "";
$postinghost = "your.news.server";   # points at your news server
```

- Make sure that the script is exectuable:

```
chmod 755 /usr/local/bin/mail2news
```

5. Procmail

The procmail config file is at /.procmailrc. If you don't already have a procmailrc file, just create one.

Make an entry for each mailing list that is to be gated to your local news server. Something like this will do the trick for most cases, but might fail for mail Bcc'd to the mailing list.

For example if your mailing list is 'jokes@netizen.com.au' and you want the newsgroup to be called 'lists.jokes' your entry would look like this:

```
:0
* TOjokes@netizen.com.au
|/usr/local/bin/mail2news lists.jokes
```

Note there's no space between the 'TO' and the list address on the second line.

You need to put a blank line between the lines for each group. Put as many entries as you want, using the same 3 lines for each group, but changing the list address and newsgroup.

6. Setting up the news groups and news server (innd)

Using ctlinnd, create the newsgroups on your news server. Remember, these are to be local news groups, so start them with a distinctive name so you can filter them out from your news distributions (in your newsfeeds file).

You also need to tell innd that the group is moderated (by using ctlinnd). Remember, innd is very sensitive to file ownership and permissions, so you need to interct at this level with innd as the news user. Indicating a moderated group is done by specifying m to the newgroup command.

```
ctlinnd newgroup lists.jokes m
```

The m tells innd that the group is moderated.

Edit your newsfeeds file to make sure that these local groups are not distributed (unless you specificaly wish this to occur).

For example, if your mailing list is called local.site.group, then you would probably want to add !local* to the second field of your up (and possibly your down) stream news sites in your newsfeeds file.

Now, in order to ensure that user messages are sent to the list automatically by innd, edit /etc/news/moderators to include a line declaring the mailing list email address as the moderator.

```
lists.jokes:jokes@netizen.com.au
```

7. If it doesn't work...

If things don't work, you need to track through the path the messages are taking to see exactly where things are breaking down. Useful tools here are the mail and news logs.

8. The Future

One problem with messages posted this way is they'll have a Newsgroups: header in them, and some other junk that the newsserver introduces. This isn't a major problem, but it makes the messages "messy". It'd be nice if some program could intercept them and re−write the headers before sending them on.