

Problems with delivery of email announcements sent by the UEC

Tom Throwe
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The issue was to understand why some members of the user community were not getting email announcements from the UEC. The main reasons why someone would not get an email message are:

1. Their email address was not on one of the lists the announcement email was sent to
2. Their email address was on one of the lists the announcement email was sent to, but the address was incorrect
3. The announcement email was correctly sent by the mailing list server, but the addressee's email server was down or having problems
4. The announcement email was correctly sent by the mailing list server, but was caught by a filter on either the addressee's email server or email client

Case 1 can be checked by knowing the email address in question and checking for its existence on the email lists that the announcement was sent to. If the address was not on any of the lists, then the issue is understood and the correct address needs to be added to the appropriate mailing list. If the address was on one of the lists, then if the address was not correct, we need to go on to case 2, if the address was correct, we need to go on to case 3 or 4.

For case 2, the email to the incorrect address would have bounced and the owner of the list would have gotten a notification (unless notifications have been suppressed). The list owner should have either determined the correct address from other information, contacted the user to verify the address and correct it on the list, or dropped the erroneous address from the list and notified the appropriate people of that action so that they could attempt to identify the dropped user and get them to register with the list correctly.

Case 3 will produce a return message to the mailing list owner informing them of a temporary delivery problem. The email system will continue to attempt to deliver the mail for four days. This type of server failure will not just affect email from the UEC, but all email to the addressee.

Case 4 cannot be addressed by the mailing list owner, but must be addressed by the end user. Usually filters on email servers do not delete filtered emails, but put them in a special folder, and the user can check that folder. A client filter can delete incoming emails, but the user can set the client to log such actions and can check the log. If the client filter is not deleting messages, then the message will be in the folder the filter placed it in. In either client case, the user needs to adjust the filter.

UEC Mailing Lists

UEC mailing lists are maintained on a BNL server, lists.bnl.gov, and an external server, lists.rhicuec.org. From the web page describing all of the public BNL mailing lists, 14 lists were identified as possible lists that the UEC would utilize. According to Steve Giordano, the maintainer of the [rhicuec.org](http://lists.rhicuec.org) lists, there are seven mailing lists on lists.rhicuec.org. Of these lists.rhicuec.org lists, six are meant to replace the corresponding BNL lists. The seventh list, [rhic-ag-s-complex-users](http://lists.rhicuec.org), has more members than any of the BNL lists, so it is not clear if it was intended to replace one of the BNL

lists. In any event, I have not yet received the list of members for the seventh list.

Table 2 contains a summary of the membership of each of the mailing lists along with the number of overlapping members between the lists.rhicuec.org lists and the corresponding BNL list. Since none of

List	ORG Count	BNL Count	Overlap
Ags-rhic-users-l		583	
Agscontacts-l		16	
rhic-ag-s-complex-users	1681		
rhicagsuec(-l)	21	23	7
rhicagsuec-exofficio(-l)	9	10	9
rhicagsuec-fpp(-l)	9	9	1
rhicagsuec-mco(-l)	12	10	2
rhicagsuec-qol(-l)	13	7	2
rhicagsuec-sas(-l)	11	8	2
rhiccontactst-l		14	
uec-programatic-l		0	
uec-spig-l		0	
users-center-employee-facility-users-l		135	
users-center-pr-contacts-l		56	
userscentercontacts-l		31	

Table 1: Membership count of UEC mailing lists

the membership lists had anything but email addresses in them, the overlap is in addresses that matched, and will not account for anyone who uses multiple email addresses (probably rare). All of the entries in the member lists have been entered into a database, so queries can be made on the lists, but since first and last names are not in the lists, the queries can only be made on domains (for example, bnl.gov or gmail .com) or on full email addresses. So, to determine if an individual is on a particular list, you need to know the email address they registered to the list with.

The email that Elke forwarded to me that exhibited the issue had five email lists hosted on the BNL list server (rhicagsuec-exofficio-l@lists.bnl.gov, rhiccontacts-l@lists.bnl.gov, agscontacts-l@lists.bnl.gov, userscentercontacts-l@lists.bnl.gov, ags-rhic-users-l@lists.bnl.gov) and two BNL Exchange email aliases, namely “PhysicsPersonnel@bnl.gov” and “allcad@bnl.gov.” None of the new rhicuec.org lists were on the email. The “PhysicsPersonnel” alias is owned by Jackie Mooney in the Physics Department and is a list of all active members of the Physics Department. She receives any bounce notices related to this alias and makes an effort to verify the accuracy of the contents of the alias. Jackie reported no recent problems with email bouncing from this alias. I do not know who maintains the “allcad” alias, which I assume is a similar list of all active members of the C-AD Department. I do not have the contents of either of the department aliases at this time.

At this point, known email addresses can be checked for in all of the actual mailing lists since the addresses on these lists have been put into a database. If the address should be on one of the BNL department aliases, then the corresponding owner of the alias needs to be consulted until the contents of the alias can be added to the database for searching. If the user's address is on one of the lists or aliases the announcement was sent to, then a discussion with the user about possible server problems or filtering would need to take place.