

# MAIL-X Reimagining the Mailing List

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Poll: 10 csail-related, 64 mtv-interns

## Oversharing

## Undersharing

### Problems

**Lots of posts are not interesting to you or are spammy.**  
'Sometimes, too much unnecessary discussions. People post random things.' - mtv-interns user  
'I don't like a lot of non-relevant traffic coming in my mailbox' - mtv-interns user  
'The political debate threads on csail-related upset me greatly' - csail-related user

**Reply-alls to email threads that you don't care about.**  
'A lot of +1 replies causes notification and breaks the concentration.' - mtv-interns user  
'congratbots and +1 emails' - mtv-interns user  
'many stupid discussions' - mtv-interns user

**Some people spam or you just find them annoying.**  
'There are some people who create a lot of noise.' - mtv-interns user  
'some people are just too annoying' -mtv-interns user

**You are too shy/nervous to post to a large list.**  
'I don't want to look dumb or like a nuisance posting to the mailing list, so refrain.' - csail-related user  
'Too big a crowd, afraid of making mistakes, afraid of looking stupid' - csail-related user

**You don't want to post to certain people on the list.**  
'There's a notable MIT person who randomly harasses list members about free software.' - csail-related user

**You don't want to bother or spam people needlessly.**  
'I don't want to spam everybody.' - mtv-interns user  
'I don't want to post something to such a large group of people, and haven't had any need to post something.' - csail-related user

**Sometimes you just want an answer to a simple question, but don't want to ask everyone.**  
'[I posted once on csail-related because] csail is a bunch of nerds and in all likelihood, someone would have a metal detector' - csail-related user

### Consequently...

**People unsubscribe and miss potentially useful information.**  
'It's a complete waste of time. How do people have so much time to discuss stupid things' - mtv-interns user  
'It's the most useless list and the biggest time-waster' - mtv-interns user  
'A lot of unnecessary emails - too many notifications disturb me while working' - mtv-interns user

**The list loses possibly enriching contributions or is taken over by a minority.**  
'[csail-related is] at its best when...Richard Stallman doesn't reply with a plug for privacy/free everything.' - csail-related user  
'I...[n]ever found something interesting to share.' - mtv-interns user  
'I would never post to this list.' -mtv-interns

### Solutions

Mail-X sends original messages along with a follow link. You only get replies to messages that you explicitly choose to follow.

Mail-X lets you create a follow-list and a mute-list, within a group as well as globally within a list.

Mail-X lets you choose to follow certain topics that you pick or that the system infers you would be interested in.

Mail-X lets you give each message a "budget" of X random recipients. The message goes only to those recipients. If a recipient 'upvotes' a message, X more people get the message. A message of interest to more than X% will tend to spread to everyone.

When you submit a message, you can make Mail-X distribute it slowly, to a growing population, until it gets answered.

You can choose to explicitly exclude certain people from your email thread.

## Interface

### Email

- help@murmur.csail.mit.edu
- <list-name>+<option>@murmur.csail.mit.edu
- all@murmur.csail.mit.edu

### Admin Interface

Email	Active	Admin	Moderator	Member	Guest
anantb@cs.stanford.edu	true	false	false	false	false
anantb@csail.mit.edu	true	true	false	false	false
helloanant007@gmail.com	true	false	false	false	false

### Web Interface

MailX interface showing an email thread with a 'Follow' button and a 'Reply' button.

## Architecture

