

What are Bulletin Boards and Discussion Lists?

Bulletin Boards: A bulletin board or message board is a discussion system. The users log on to the bulletin board website to read and leave messages. A bulletin board can be used to post messages to a group rather than e-mailing messages to each member. Bulletin boards have the advantage that all messages posted on the board are kept for users to refer to, and the messages are usually “threaded” (the first message on a particular topic) is kept together with subsequent messages on the same topic, so it is easy to follow the thread of the discussion.

Discussion Lists: Discussion lists are simply an e-mail system where every e-mail you send is copied automatically to all other subscribers. Most lists were originally run from mainframe or minicomputers at universities around the world, but an increasing number are run from PCs or via the World Wide Web. Most lists are free and can be joined or left any time. The methods of subscription are various. We can subscribe by going to a Web page and filling in the appropriate form. The other way to subscribe is to send an e-mail message to a computer address. If you are not sure how to subscribe, just experiment. If you make a mistake, the computer list will give you an explanatory message or detailed instructions.

Notes: Many people join a discussion list and just read other people’s contributions without e-mailing or posting, a message to the list themselves. This is known as lurking. If you lose your temper and send an angry message to a discussion list, it is known as flaming.

Rules for Writing E-mail

An electronic-mail message can seem rude or obnoxious to the recipient, even when you didn’t mean it that way. Here are a few suggestions regarding mail style:

1. Use polite language and avoid dirty language.
2. Don’t use language to harass people.
3. You can be humorous but be careful of your language.
4. If you find some aggressive messages, avoid the argument by letting other people end the topic or you can change to another topic.
5. Your subject line should tell the recipient as much as possible about your message, without getting too long. “ Tonight’s softball game is canceled.” Is much better than “Important announcement.” Don’t try to put your entire message on the subject line.
6. Check your spelling. Use a word processor to compose your message if your mail program lacks a spell-check feature.
7. When in doubt, save your message overnight. Read and edit it again in the morning before you hand it in.