

# E-Mail discussion Forums in Library and Information Services (LIS): A Study

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## ABSTRACT

The email facilities are currently provided free service through many search engines groups. The discussion forums are discussed through e-mail groups in same professions. The terms discussion forum "Forum, Mailing list and List are using interchangeably. This paper made an attempt to analysis library and information services (LIS) forum. This paper analyzed the highlights definition, purpose of the study, groups available over the internet and features of the forum, the number of members, the mode of hosting the messages among LIS forum.

## Keywords

*Forum, e-mailgroups, Message hosting*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

LIS forum is one of the early internet tools for discussing among the core interested groups. E-mail discussion forums are one of the early applications of e-mail developed on networks like Bitnet, which have become very popular on Internet now. Using e-mail as the medium, forums enable informal communication among a group of people in a specific area, irrespective of their geographical location. Computer software used to set up and operate a forum on a network computer is called as the list server. The email facilities are currently free service provided by many search engines groups. Number of emails can be created from different groups of service providers. There are several groups such as Yahoo, Google, etc. .

LIS forum, also known as "Lists", "Computer conference", "Mailing List", "Discussion Groups", "List Server" or "Mail Server", are those in which a person can carry out with a group of people having similar interest. The discussion is carried out either by putting questions to such forums or by letting others to know about latest things, happening in that particular area. Discussions are carried out using email. The terms discussion forum "Forum, Mailing list and List are using interchangeably". Sometimes debate can also appear; experts give their opinion and conclude with some solutions for the debate.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITREATURE

Web Impact Factor The WIF provides quantitative tools for ranking, evaluating, categorizing, and comparing web sites, Cotera (2005)<sup>3</sup> presented update of New Professionals Discussion Group (NPDG) meeting. The NPDG for the first time during the IFLA conference in Buenos Aires in August last year, where the members held a brainstorming session to try to figure out the areas that the NPDG should

concentrate on in 2005. Pattee (2007)<sup>4</sup> discussed in list-serv, the American Library Association censorship watches, and various media outlets, the discussion of young adult literature and audience appropriateness has reemerged and two primary means of address have been suggested: the institution of a book rating and labeling system and the creation of "safe" booklists. Hill (2007)<sup>5</sup> stated that electronic communication has become increasingly prevalent in organizational settings. Strategic planning researchers have noted the importance of communication to the success of planning and the increasing reliance on electronic communication in planning initiatives. The finding that all but the most engaged planning participants reported being overwhelmed by list-serv E-mails led to the development of the E-mail Inverse Importance Index grounded theory, which holds "The more important a sender perceives an item of information to be, the more people he or she will send it to in a mass distribution electronic mail. Inversely, the more people who receive the mass distributed E-mail, the less important the receiver will perceive the information to be to him or herself directly.

## 3. PURPOSE OF STUDY

1. To create awareness amongst the LIS professionals and staff and students community.
2. To offer an opportunity to put forth innovative ideas, debate some of the innovative ideas and promote closer cooperation and development amongst the readers.
3. To quick exchange of information and documents with other regional, national and international networks and libraries.
4. To communicate with several people from different parts of the world within a short duration.
5. To act as an electronic forum (or conference) for same interest group

## 4. FUNCTIONS OF LIS FORUM

LIS Forum group can be created any body who wish to do it. Normally, LIS group of people creates a group for discussing latest / issues among them. The members are requested to register with the group by sending a registering with group. The membership registration has to accept by the moderator. one who maintains the group. They may accept or reject your subscription / request. The same way you can also unsubscribe the membership from the group. Members can send the messages, issues, queries in the related subject group. A message can be sent in a group mail. It reaches quickly to all the members.

**Groups:** There are many LIS groups' services provided by many search engines. The following are some of the search engines

- Yahoo groups
- Google groups
- MSN Groups
- Windows Live Groups
- GroupSpaces

The following paragraphs discussed the group information

#### Yahoo Groups

According to wikipedia, Yahoo Groups is one of the world's largest collections of online discussion boards. The term Groups refers to Internet communication which is a hybrid between an electronic mailing list and a threaded Internet forum, in other words. Group messages can be read and posted by e-mail or on the Group's webpage like a web forum. In addition, members can choose whether to receive individual, daily digest or Special Delivery e-mails, or simply read Group posts on the Group's web site. Groups can be created with public or member-only access

#### Google Groups

Google Groups is a service from Google and it supports discussion groups, including many Usenet newsgroups, based on common interests. The service was started in 1995 as Deja News, and was transitioned to Google Groups after a February 2001 buyout. Membership in Google Groups is free of charge and many groups are anonymous. Users can find discussion groups related to their interests and participate in threaded conversations, either through a web interface or by e-mail. They can also start new groups. Google Groups also includes an archive of Usenet newsgroup postings dating back to 1981 and supports reading and posting to Usenet groups. Users can also set up mailing list archives for e-mail lists that are hosted elsewhere.<sup>9</sup>

#### MSN Groups

MSN Groups was a website part of the MSN network which hosted online communities, and which contained Web pages, hosted images, and contained a message board. MSN Groups was shut down on February 21, 2009 as part of a migration of online applications and services to the Windows Live brand, and later renovated as Windows Live Groups.

#### Windows Live Groups

Windows Live Groups is an online service by Microsoft as part of its Windows Live range of services that enable users to create their social groups for sharing, discussion and coordination.

#### Groupspaces

GroupSpaces (styled groupspaces) is a London-based online company that provides technology to help real-world clubs, societies, associations and other groups manage their membership and activities, and promote themselves online. Founded by Oxford University students David Langer and Andy Young, the company was launched in the United Kingdom in 2007 and has since expanded into the United States and over 30 other countries.<sup>12</sup> As of November 2010, its software is used to host over 1 million memberships.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

The investigators made google search for getting the LIS Forums groups. Based on the results the following tables were generated.

## 6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### Group wise distribution of LIS Forum in India

Table 1: Group wise Distribution of LIS Forum

S. NO.	Groups Name	No. of Forum	%
1	Yahoogroup	39	54.17
2	Googlegroup	33	45.83
Total		72	100

The study has been analysed only two groups i.e. Yahoo groups and Google groups. The sample study shown in table 1, there are 72 email groups identified and taken for this study. Out of 72, 39 (54.17) groups are identified from yahoo groups and 33 (45.83) are identified from Google groups.

Mode of hosting the message in the mail groups

Hosting the message in e-mail group, there should be a moderator (List owner / creator and maintaining the group). Mail submissions to the list are automatically brought to the attention of the list moderator by the list server. Moderators review it and allow them to the members. Some groups are allowed directly send the messages by members and public.

Table 2: Mode of hosting the message through the mail groups

S.No.	Mode of hosting	LIS Forum	
		No.	%
1	Moderators	32	44.45
2	Members	15	20.83
3	Public	16	22.22
4	Restricted	9	12.50
Total		72	100

From the table 2, it shows that Moderators are controlling the message output to the members 6 groups in yahoo and 24 groups in google. Members are able to host the message, whereas 10 groups allow the members to host the message directly in yahoo groups and by public 14 groups. There are 9 groups restricted for hosting the message, in the Google group.

Table 3. Frequency of Members in LIS Forum

S.No.	Members Strength	No. of LIS Forum	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1	1.39	1.39
2	2	3	4.17	5.56
3	3	1	1.39	6.94
4	4	2	2.78	9.72

5	5	8	11.11	20.83
6	7	1	1.39	22.22
7	8	1	1.39	23.61
8	9	2	2.78	26.39
9	12	2	2.78	29.17
10	13	2	2.78	31.94
12	14	1	1.39	33.33
13	17	2	2.78	36.11
14	18	1	1.39	37.50
15	19	1	1.39	38.89
16	23	1	1.39	40.28
17	24	2	2.78	43.06
18	26	1	1.39	44.44
19	27	1	1.39	45.83
20	30	1	1.39	47.22
21	31	1	1.39	48.61
22	32	1	1.39	50.00
23	33	1	1.39	51.39
24	34	1	1.39	52.78
25	43	1	1.39	54.17
26	47	1	1.39	55.56
27	51	1	1.39	56.94
28	52	1	1.39	58.33
29	56	1	1.39	59.72
30	57	1	1.39	61.11
31	68	1	1.39	62.50
32	71	1	1.39	63.89
33	74	1	1.39	65.28
34	81	1	1.39	66.67
35	82	1	1.39	68.06
36	83	1	1.39	69.44
37	98	1	1.39	70.83
38	103	1	1.39	72.22
39	139	1	1.39	73.61
40	143	1	1.39	75.00
41	145	2	2.78	77.78
42	158	1	1.39	79.17
43	169	1	1.39	80.56
44	183	1	1.39	81.94
45	189	1	1.39	83.33
46	212	1	1.39	84.72

47	214	1	1.39	86.11
48	263	1	1.39	87.50
49	287	1	1.39	88.89
50	300	1	1.39	90.28
51	302	1	1.39	91.67
52	309	1	1.39	93.06
53	330	1	1.39	94.44
54	795	1	1.39	95.83
55	822	1	1.39	97.22
56	864	1	1.39	98.61
57	983	1	1.39	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

The table 3 shows that frequency of members LIS Forum. Most of the LIS Forum has very less member. But only 4 LIS forum has more than five hundred members

Table 4: Classification of members in LIS Forum

S.NO.	Frequency	No. of Members	
		No.	%
1	< 101	51	70.84
2	100 <201	9	12.5
3	200<301	5	6.95
4	300 < 401	3	4.16
5	700<800	1	1.39
	800 < 901	2	2.77
6	900 < 1001	1	1.39
Total		72	100

Members were grouped in to 100, 200, etc. up to 1000. From the table 4, it is seen that the members in the groups has been identified 51 members in category of less than 100. In the case of 100 to 200, only 9 members are observed. Two forum has only has member in the category of more than 800 to 900 and only forum in more than 900.

## 7. CONCLUSION

All the LIS Forum is raising day by day and its members and adding new members. The advantage of the groups is archives; it helps the members to review their hosting. To sum up library and information science forum play an important assistant role for the profession. LIS Forum is a simple and efficient way to communicate to the members. It is well playing very good role for communication among professions.

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