
An E-Mail Network for NTFS Members?

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Each morning when we arrive at the office we check our electronic mail (E-Mail). We can receive and send messages, text (ASCII) files, Word Perfect and other word processing files, and even graphics. We receive all communications from the ICES Working Group on Methods of Fish Stock Assessment and, if we send a message (or file) to a certain E-Mail address in Iceland, the message will be forwarded automatically to all E-Mail addresses on the Methods Working Group E-Mailing list. Some scientific journals are now urging authors to submit manuscripts by E-Mail.

E-Mail is becoming extraordinarily popular around the world, and for a good reason. One of us has been sending manuscripts, data files and computer programs back and forth between a SUN workstation in Canada and a Macintosh in New Zealand in order to finish a collaborative project with a colleague. It generally takes under five minutes for the message to travel halfway around the world.

Wouldn't it be nice to establish an E-Mail facility for forwarding messages to members of the Network of Tropical Fisheries Scientists? Suppose, for example, you estimated growth parameters for a stock of *Sardinella aurita* and you wanted to know how your estimates compare with those for other stocks of the species. You could simply send a message to all NTFS members on the E-Mailing list asking for information on growth rates. All you have to do is mail the message to a single address and the message would be automatically sent to everyone on the list. You could also send preprints of manuscripts around the world.

Many institutions pay a fixed amount each year for unlimited E-Mail access. For these users there is no financial problem in sending or receiving large files such as entire manuscripts and graphics files. Unfortunately, at other institutions the users have to pay for each message with the cost depending on the length of the message. Also, many users access the E-Mail facility on a mainframe computer from their PC by using a modem and phone lines. The cost of the phone call must then be considered. Therefore, two mailing lists have to be created: one for those who wish to receive all messages and the other for those who wish to receive short messages only. For example, if the sender wishes to disseminate some just-completed work on two-stage growth curves, he/she could send the entire manuscript to everyone on the long-message list (by E-Mailing the manuscript to a certain address) but send to the short-message list (by E-Mailing the notice to the second address) a notice only that the manuscript is available to everyone upon request.

What we need to establish now is how many NTFS members have access to E-Mail and have an interest in such a network. If you are interested, please contact the first author at the following Internet address:

HOENIG@MRSPOCK.NWAFCA.NF.CA

Incidentally, this E-Mail address means that there is a user account called HOENIG on a computer called MRSPOCK at a place called NWAFCA (which stands for Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Centre) in Newfoundland (NF), Canada (CA).

If you are on the Bitnet network, instead of Internet, you can still contact Hoenic but your message must go through a "gate". If you are on Bitnet, send your message to HOENIG%MRSPOCK.NWAFCA.NF.CA@NERVM

Here, the gate is called NERVM and is physically located at the University of Florida. (The general format for the address is USER%DOMAIN@GATEWAY where USER is the user's account name on the computer specified as DOMAIN, and GATEWAY is the Bitnet-Internet gateway.)

There are a number of other E-Mail networks (Omnet, CGNET, Internet*, etc.) Unfortunately, space does not permit us to explain how to exchange messages between all of the networks. If you have access to another E-Mail network or if your E-Mail facility is not yet established but you anticipate having access to E-Mail in the near future, please write to Dr. Hoenic at the address below.

We would like to know the following information:

- your name and institution
- E-Mail address or addresses
- regular mailing address
- whether or not you must pay for each message and whether you would like to be on the long- or short-message mailing list.

If there is sufficient interest we will establish a mail forwarding facility for NTFS scientists.

FINDING ACCESS TO E-MAIL

If your institution does not have E-Mail facilities, you may be able to log onto another computer using a modem and phone lines. Check with the computer center at the nearest university to see if E-Mail is available. Another possibility is to get a commercial computer account. Try looking in the phone book for the nearest large city. There may be a listing for CGNET or other computer service company. Another possibility is to contact the local offices of multinational corporations and ask if they can tell you how to access E-Mail facilities.

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*ICLARM's E-Mail address is (CGNET) ICLARM and (INTERNET) ICLARM@CGNET.COM