

Attention Electronic Mail Users !

New User - Supported ATP News and Help Service via E - mail

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An ATP users' forum and bulletin board system has been established which will allow ATP users to share information on an informal basis. Free subscription is available for all licensed ATP users who have access to BITNET or Internet (or other connected e-mail networks). ATP users can quickly dash off a single message which is automatically forwarded to all others who subscribe to this service. Since e-mail is being utilized, communication is virtually instantaneous. Typical message content is expected to be requests for help with modeling problems, offering solutions to other's modeling problems, suggestions for ATP development, pointing out suspected program bugs, announcing upcoming ATP meetings or seminars, etc.

An ATP e-mail list server address has been established to handle the flow of e-mail involved in this ATP user's forum. E-mail sent to the ATP list server address is automatically forwarded to all whose names are on its subscriber list. A copy of every message passing through the ATP list server is also placed in an archive. Subscribers thus have the capability of searching through the archives for past correspondence that may be of interest (similar to a bulletin board system).

How To Subscribe

Subscription is free and simple, and is done via e-mail. Simply send an e-mail message to either of the following addresses:

Internet: listserv@vm1.nodak.edu
BITNET: LISTSERV@NDSUVM1

Each line of text in the body of a message sent to listserv is interpreted as a command to the list server (more about this later). To subscribe, the following line of text must be the first and only line of text in the body of the message:

SUB ATP-EMTP Your Full Name and Title

For example, when I subscribed, I gave the following command:

SUB ATP-EMTP Bruce A. Mork, P.E.

The subject of this message is unimportant, and can be left blank. This command adds your e-mail address to the mailing list called ATP-EMTP . That's all there is to it. Within a minute or so the list server will

send you confirmation of your subscription to ATP-EMTP. Then you are all set.

You can then send mail to ATP-EMTP at either of the following addresses:

Internet: atp-emtp@vm1.nodak.edu

BITNET: ATP-EMTP@NDSUVM1

The messages you send are automatically forwarded to all others who subscribe to the ATP-EMTP mailing list, as well as being added into the archive. ATP-EMTP will also return a copy of your message to you to confirm that it is being forwarded. You will also, of course, receive copies of any e-mail that others send to ATP-EMTP.

Note that the ATP-EMTP mail server will only forward your mail if you have subscribed. If you use more than one e-mail address, you must subscribe from each of those addresses.

Direct Access to Scott Meyer and Guido Empereur ?

From past conversations with Guido Empereur, it appears that he has had access to e-mail for several years. However, he has not often had occasion to use it. Scott Meyer has never had access to e-mail at BPA, although plans are in the works for BPA to be tied into Internet sometime in the next two years. Meanwhile, interim arrangements have been made for Scott to access e-mail via modem connection to a computer at a cooperating university.

In summary, we would assume that Guido and Scott will soon be among the subscribers who follow the "traffic" flowing through the ATP-EMTP mail server. Even more importantly, it means that Scott and Guido will be directly reachable (quickly and at no cost) via e-mail. In cases where information can be exchanged via e-mail, this will remove many of the frustrations, expenses and delays associated with faxing, phone calls and postal mail.

How to Wrangle Access to E-Mail if You Don't Already Have It

If you have a good working relationship with a nearby university that is connected to Internet or BITNET, you may be able to wrangle a logon and have them show you how to use the e-mail system on their computer. Then you can access their computer via modem by making a local phone call. Such an interim arrangement would be negotiated on a case by case basis, with those who are in charge of computer resources at the university. This is a time where ATP users in industry can benefit from their past cooperation with the local universities. In the long term, though, it is best that your company check into getting connected to Internet. Your local university computer center can tell you who to contact about providing a communications connection to Internet.

Other Useful Commands to Send to the List Server

In addition to the SUB command that is sent to subscribe, many other commands can be sent to listserv@vm1.nodak.edu to modify the way you send and receive mail via ATP-EMTP, or to request other information. After you have subscribed to the ATP-EMTP mail list for a while, you may find a few of the following commands to be useful:

INFO GENINTRO ---- Listserv will send you a file containing a general introduction to listserv commands.

SET ATP-EMTP option - Change the way you send and receive mail via ATP-EMTP, where "option" may be any of the following:

ACK --- ATP-EMTP acknowledges receipt of each message that you send it.

NOACK --- Turn off the ACK feature.

REPRO ---	ATP-EMTP returns a copy of each message you send it, in order to confirm receipt of your message. This is default. If you don't want a copy of your messages returned to you, use the ACK option.
NOMAIL ---	Stops the forwarding of mail from ATP-EMTP to the address you send this to listserv from. This is useful if you have subscribed to the list from more than one mail address, and don't want mail delivered to all addresses. It is also convenient to temporarily stop mail delivery (i.e., during your vacation), but still allow you to send mail to ATP-EMTP.
MAIL ---	Undoes the NOMAIL option described above.
INFO DATABASE ---	Returns information about the archiving system, and how to do a database-type search to retrieve archived information.
INDEX ATP-EMTP ---	Returns a list of available archive files.
REVIEW ATP-EMTP ---	Returns a list of all subscribers.
SIGNOFF ATP-EMTP ---	Cancel your subscription.

Other E-Mail Possibilities

In addition to sending and receiving text messages, binary and text files can be sent through e-mail. Files originating from a PC can be uploaded and downloaded to the reader's mail-server computer using a terminal emulator having a file transfer protocol such as Kermit. In order to pass unscathed through the e-mail maze, text files must have no lines longer than 80 characters, and the characters can be only 7-bit text. 7-bit control characters and 8-bit characters may cause unpredictable results. Most ATP input data files satisfy these constraints, so it should be possible to directly send these as a simple text mail file.

If you have Internet access via a local ethernet using the TCP / IP standard, then text or binary files of almost any size can be transferred over Internet at incredible speeds using ftp (file transfer protocol). A test of these capabilities was performed in late July, 1991. All of the files on ATP distribution disks GIVE1 and GIVE2 were archived into two large files GIVE1.ZIP and GIVE2.ZIP, each having a size of about 1.1 MB. The files were then transferred from The Norwegian Institute of Technology in Trondheim, Norway, to North Dakota State University. Each of the 1.1 MB files was transferred intact in about 9 minutes.

This really could be a boost to ATP distribution, making it easy for users to obtain the latest version, reducing Scott Meyer's distribution hassles and doing away with the delays of postal mail. It is unknown if the Salford DOS extender could also be distributed in this way. Salford would have to be contacted about the legal implications.

Summary and Conclusions

This news and help system is seen to supplement the quarterly EMTP newsletters which are now published. In contrast to the long, detailed, carefully thought-out (and time-consuming to write) contributions to EMTP News, the information shared via the ATP-EMTP list server is expected to be brief to-the-point requests for help, offers of advice or help, reports of suspected program bugs, and suggestions for program development and User's Guide improvements. It is hoped that this real-time users' forum via e-mail will evolve into a user-supported help network. Assuming that program developers are also subscribing, this system can also serve to accelerate program development. EMTP News could in the future offer a quarterly distillation of the e-mail "traffic" flowing through the ATP-EMTP list server, which would benefit those ATP users who do not have access to e-mail.