LARA Email Discussion List User Policy

The following is the User List Policy which was posted to the LARA email list on 3rd February 2009.

Dear all,

The LARA Executive Committee has agreed that it would be helpful for this discussion list to have user guidelines. Please observe these when posting messages to the LARA email discussion list. In the event of non-compliance the user concerned will get a warning via personal email and their messages will become moderated so please observe the guidelines (please note: sometimes the Google spam filter will moderate messages automatically if it meets Google's spam criteria and this has nothing to do with the LARA Exec). Users could be banned at the discretion of the list moderators. These policies exist to encourage helpful and constructive dialogue on the list.

The guidelines are drawn up by the IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force) which provides leadership in Internet related standards.

John Thompson, List Moderator
Graham Edwards, List Co-moderator

User Guidelines

1   Read both mailing lists and newsgroups for one to two months before you post anything. This helps you to get an understanding of the culture of the group.

2   Do not blame the system administrator for the behaviour of the system users.

3   Consider that a large audience will see your posts. That may include your present or your next boss. Take care in what you write. Remember too, that mailing lists and Newsgroups are frequently archived, and that your words may be stored for a very long time in a place to which many people have access.

4   If you should find yourself in a disagreement with one person, make your responses to each other via mail rather than continue to send messages to the list or the group. If you are debating a point on which the group might have some interest, you may summarize for them later.

5   Don't get involved in flame wars. Neither post nor respond to incendiary material.

6   Avoid sending messages or posting articles which are no more than gratuitous replies to replies.

7   There are Newsgroups and Mailing Lists which discuss topics of wide varieties of interests. These represent a diversity of lifestyles, religions, and cultures. Posting articles or sending messages to a group whose point of view is offensive to you simply to tell them they are offensive is not acceptable. Sexually and racially harassing messages may also have legal implications. There is software available to filter items you might find objectionable.

8   Assume that individuals speak for themselves, and what they say does not represent their organization (unless stated explicitly).

9   Remember that both mail and news take system resources. Pay attention to any specific rules covering their uses your organization may have.

10   Messages and articles should be brief and to the point. Don't wander off-topic, don't ramble and don't send mail or post messages solely to point out other people's errors in typing or spelling. These, more than any other behaviour, mark you as an immature beginner.

11   Subject lines should follow the conventions of the group.

12   Forgeries and spoofing are not approved behaviour.

13   Advertising is welcomed on some lists and Newsgroups, and abhorred on others! This is another

example of knowing your audience before you post. Unsolicited advertising which is completely off-topic will most certainly guarantee that you get a lot of hate mail. Please do not use the LARA list to advertise your business, a product, etc.

14   If you are sending a reply to a message or a posting be sure you summarize the original at the top of the message, or include just enough text of the original to give a context. This will make sure readers understand when they start to read your response. Since NetNews, especially, is proliferated by distributing the postings from one host to another, it is possible to see a response to a message before seeing the original. Giving context helps everyone. But do not include the entire original!

15   Again, be sure to have a signature which you attach to your message. This will guarantee that any peculiarities of mailers or newsreaders which strip header information will not delete the only reference in the message of how people may reach you.

16   Be careful when you reply to messages or postings. Frequently replies are sent back to the address which originated the post - which in many cases is the address of a list or group! You may accidentally send a personal response to a great many people, embarrassing all involved. It's best to type in the address instead of relying on "reply."

17   Delivery receipts, non-delivery notices, and vacation programs are neither totally standardized nor totally reliable across the range of systems connected to Internet mail. They are invasive when sent to mailing lists, and some people consider delivery receipts an invasion of privacy. In short, do not use them.

18   If you find a personal message has gone to a list or group, send an apology to the person and to the group.

19   Be careful with monospacing fonts and diagrams. These will display differently on different systems, and with different mailers on the same system.