



7 Ezine List Hosting Choices

Everyone has a choice on how their ezine is produced, hosted, and distributed. Below are several companies that provide services to maintain subscriber lists, and tools to help with ezine creation.

Mailing list discussion groups have been in existence since the 1960s and were used to share information. They are called Usenet, newsgroups, news or sometimes Netnews. In the mid-80s Eric Thomas developed "listservs" for use with IBM computers. Listservs usually offer the most features to their subscribers. Majordomo was developed in 1992 by Brent Chapman and continues to be used by many ezine publishers. For an article about listservs, go to http://www.wilsonweb.com/wmt7/lserver_intro.htm

There are many choices for hosting and distributing services and the number of companies offering these services is growing. Use the information in this article as a guide. While the content that you are producing is an ezine, you will be gathering a list of subscribers. Don't be afraid to try the BCC feature or free e-list hosting services to get a feel for what is involved in producing an ezine. Personally, I've learned a lot by going this route.

Do your homework before creating an ezine. Look for ezines you like and start a list of features you like or don't like. Find some you like? Look on the bottom of the email to see what hosting company they use (not always available).

Remember - keep your clients in mind when figuring out what sort of ezine to send out.

1. BCC

BCC stands for "blind carbon copy" or for those of you who have never used a typewriter and don't know what carbon paper is, then it stands for "blind courtesy copy".

Created in 1997, it was a way to send emails out in bulk while hiding the recipient list from other readers. Now primarily spammers use it. Never used BCC? If this feature is part of your email program, the directions will be in the Help area of your email program. You will know when someone has sent you a message, using BCC, when the To line reads "unlisted recipients". Although beware: many email clients allow a Reply to All email to be returned to the BCC list too – this means that even though they might not know the addresses of the subscribers, spammers can still use your list this way!

On the negative side of using BCC's, some hosting companies (like AOL, Yahoo, Hotmail, MSN and a growing number of others) won't accept mail from anyone who sends emails to more than 25 people at a time in BCC or a certain number of emails per hour. And some new anti-S^pam programs will take any emails with BCC and funnel directly to garbage, delete or "S^pam" folder. So if you have a larger mailing list, this is NOT a good feature for you to use.



Final note on BCC – your own ISP (Internet Service Provider) may not allow you to send out emails to more than 200 people per hour. They tell you they do this to prevent spam, but if you don't follow their rules, your email account can be shut down. You will have to call them and explain what happened (unfortunately, they will not call you to tell you they've done this, you'll know because you can't send mail out to others).

2. Your Hosting Service

Check with your hosting service. Many times, they offer a newsletter as part of the hosting service and it's free! It could be a mailing list they personally provide you as part of your hosting fee. OR they may have an add-on program called Fantastico and that includes PHP List, a free ezine program that is easy to set up on your website. However, PHP List has a steep learning curve.

3. Advertising Companies, Copywriters and Virtual Assistants

Choosing a service, designing, and then creating an ezine to send out several times a month may not be the best use of your time. Advertising and marketing companies, copywriters and virtual assistants all provide "in-house" ezine services to their clients. If you already have this kind of expertise on your side – use it! These services usually start at \$200 per issue.

4. Use Majordomo

While it is a popular and low-cost solution, this is not the easiest alternative because it is a text-only service. It has many features that can be automated, making some things easier for you – however subscriptions are often rejected because the subscriber is using an email program with HTML text in the message. For more information on this service, visit: <http://www.faqs.org/faqs/mail/list-admin/majordomo-faq/>

5. Free Online Services

Why not "try on" a free service as a way to become familiar with hosts and their features. Free services do "cost" – the company will insert an ad either at the top or bottom of your ezine.

- a. <http://groups.google.com> Google Groups - This is a newer service, no annoying ads.
- b. www.topica.com Topica – Very basic. There is a cost involved in adding many members at one time. So before you move your e-list to this service check with their customer support. Topica automatically puts a link at the end of each email with "to leave" directions and you can choose to not have ads about gambling, sex, alcohol, etc.
- c. www.yahogroups.com Yahoo Groups - When become a member, you will have access to one of the largest community building tools on the internet. On the downside, you will find that Yahoo Groups adds the largest ads to each email and uses 'beacons' and other such marketing behind-the-scenes products which can result in your subscribers getting unsolicited email.
- d. www.bravenet.com Bravenet - Limit 500 subscribers per e-list and double opt-in subscriptions only. You can create as many additional e-lists as you choose. Easy system allows you to email yourself a copy of your subscriber list. Side-note: Bravenet is an excellent company offering many free and low cost services.
- e. <http://freelists.org> FreeList – For Internet and technology related lists. No ads.
- f. <http://msnusers.com/> I am a believer in Microsoft programs but have to admit that I haven't



used their free groups.

6. Email lists (Ezine) FREE or FEE CGI/PHP

Here you download a program from the Internet and install it on your web site. Often, for an additional fee; or sometimes as part of the cost, the company will install it for you. *Buyer beware:* Before you buy any software, check your web hosting company (your website must have a web host to show up on the web) to make sure it will support the type of program you want to add to your website and make sure to check their rules regarding how many emails you can send out each hour. Some hosting companies have limits on how big your list can be.

You'll find three words used in relation to program types. They are CGI (common gateway interface), PHP (php hypertext preprocessor), PL (pearl). Of the three types PHP is the most secure language and it's quicker. PL isn't something I'd recommend. It has been around the longest and isn't very secure. By secure I mean that it's secure against hackers. Some CGI/PHP options available are:

Prices start at \$0 per month for smaller ezines and end up in the thousands of dollars for larger lists. Some have subscriber or bandwidth limits, offer free trials, or even offer the service for free for small e-lists. Each web host will offer different services.

FREE

1. Always check with your hosting company to see what they offer as part of the web hosting service.
2. Dada is a CGI program I have used. It is free or low cost, includes a database and archives your messages for others to view. You can send out a text message, html message or both. It does not provide a scheduling system feature. It is easier to learn than PHP, mentioned above. <http://dadamailproject.com/>
3. PHP List is an excellent PHP based program. This program has many advanced options. If your website hosting program includes Fantastico, it also contains PHP List which is very easy to add to your website with no extra coding. Or you can get it here: <http://www.phplist.com/>
4. Search for free CGI and PHP mail scripts using your favorite search engine.
- 5.
- 6.

FEE

Two things you need to consider before buying: 1) how many emails you will send out per month; 2) how many subscribers you will have. Most prices are based on those two things. Look for companies that will grow as your subscriber base grows.

1. Low cost choice <http://www.subscribed.co.uk/> . £29.99 is approx. \$60 US funds per year. They have been around for years and years. One of the first HTML ezine programs I found and tested.
2. I Contact: Quite a few of my clients and students choose this one. It grows with you. <http://www.kqzyfj.com/click-2563375-10524654>
3. Constant Contact <http://www.tkqlhce.com/click-2563375-10296166>



4. Topica An oldy but goodie, they have a paid and free system, too www.topica.com
5. List Channel www.listchannel.com
6. List Universe www.List-Universe.com
7. Campaigner
<http://g.gotmarketing.com/app/campaigner/website/products/campaigner/campaigner.jsp>
8. What Helps www.whathelps.com
9. List Serve Stay away from this one. I know no one who has used it without problems.
www.listserve.com/
10. Microsoft's B Central <http://www.bcentral.com/products/lb/default.asp>
11. Comparison chart of ezine hosting companies by Gammadyne
<http://www.gammadyne.com/gm-comparison.htm>
12. Infacta <http://www.infacta.com/gm.asp>
13. Mujlti Mailing List Manger http://www.sellwide.com/multi_mailing_lists_manager.shtml
<http://www.subscribermail.com/> Subscribermail has been recommended by members of ClickZ one of the premier marketing newsletters. However, their site doesn't provide you with a demo or price list.

7. Auto Responders FREE or FEE Ezine

With an ezine list, you usually send one message out at a time. While a few ezine companies allow you to schedule a message or two to go out, most do not schedule messages.

Auto-responders usually allow you to send out 3 types of messages.

- a) a series of messages that that can be scheduled to be delivered a certain amount of days after someone joins your list.
- b) a series of messages scheduled to be sent out on certain dates.
- c) a email sent out, like our ezine, whenever you want.

Some auto responders allow you to add attachments, like a PDF file, to your posts. Many do not.

Most auto responders allow you an unlimited amount of lists. So you can have a list per product in addition to any other sort of lists. A few auto-responder programs put a limit on the size of your lists (number of subscribers) or the amount of times you can email them each month.

Before purchasing ANY program that you put onto your website, make sure that your hosting 1) has the space for it, 2) will allow you to add programs, and 3) tells you how many emails you can send out per hour.

When you set the program to the number they give you in #3, deduct 100. This is because many hosts won't allow you to send out more than 500 emails per hour and if you do, they shut down your system. Deducting 100 will give you a safety margin. Some hosting services, like Hostgator, want you to pay a large fee per month if you have a list of more than 5000 names, or they only allow you to send out to lists of 900 or more after 1a.m. in the morning. Learn more about Hostgator at <http://secure.hostgator.com/cgi-bin/affiliates/clickthru.cgi?id=06872784>

Most fee programs offer a trial period. So make sure you can test them and play around with them for



a while prior to signing up for the test. No testing period? Run!

FREE on their website
<http://www.freeautobot.com/>

On your website (free and you own it)

Infinity Responder is a great first auto responder <http://www.infinityresponder.org/>

On your website (you buy it and own it)

Auto Responder Plus –
<http://www.autoresponseplus.com/link.php?a=elevatingyourbusiness>

On their server

- Goldbar hosting/autoresponder program
http://www.goldbar.net/ua/link.php?affID=elevatingyourbusiness_host
- Goldbar1 Affiliate program/shoppingcart/autoresponder
http://www.goldbar.net/ua/link.php?affID=elevatingyourbusiness_gb1
- Get Reponse <http://www.getresponse.com/index/elevatingyourbusiness>
- A Weber <http://www.aweber.com/?207097>
- Cartville <http://www.cartville.com/app/default.asp?pr=32&id=38376>
- Free Auto Bot <http://www.freeautobot.com>
- List Mail Pro <http://www.listmailpro.com/>
- List of software companies <http://list-business.com/list-software/>

NOTE: Protect your subscriber list.

BE CAREFUL: If you already have a growing list, congrats! When you purchase an auto-responder program, learn if you can upload your current email list to the new service. If not, you'll have to invite your old members to the new list. Know that you will lose subscribers. You might lose as many as half of your subscribers or more.

Choose a company that allows YOU to easily download the email addresses of subscribers. Then download your list at least monthly in case something happens with the database

Always provide permission-based email lists. i.e. people subscribe online and have to confirm their subscription OR people can give you their contact information in writing.

More Information:

- Hire the author, Maria for an hour session and let's determine the best ezine plan and format for your business: <http://www.elevatingyourbusiness.com/sessions/use/PowerHour>
- Create Your First Ezine Ezine CD with more tips and tricks in a workbook with an audio www.CorporateSecretsMarketing.com/ezine.html



About Maria Marsala

An irrepressible entrepreneur, Maria sold AVON at age 14 and landed on Wall Street three years later. Fiercely determined and keenly insightful, Maria became a bond trader when female executives were as rare as pink diamonds.

In 1998, brimming with over 25 years of business expertise, Maria Marsala created *Elevating Your Business*, a company helping business owners who struggle with business planning, administration, and marketing. *Elevating Your Business* is dedicated to helping high-achieving owners, and independent professionals selling services to increase sales, productivity and performance. Is your existing business structure draining your time, energy, and profitability?

Drawing on her experience as an advisor, educator, trained coach, speaker, and author, Maria will tailor a solution to help you detect and overcome your unique obstacles, helping you create the business and lifestyle only imagined. Contact Maria today and take the first step toward an elevated bottom line, turbo-charged productivity, and a sparkling quality of life.

P.S.: In just 10-minutes you can self-diagnose your companies strengths and weaknesses. Get "Business Check UP: Rate Your Businesses Health" today by visiting <http://www.CoachMaria.com> or <http://www.ElevatingYourBusiness.com>

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