

Frequently Asked Questions About FramGov and FramBors E-Lists

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Managing my Subscription

"Once I have a profile on E-democracy.org, how do I sign up for a Framingham group?"

Now that you are a member on E-Democracy, joining other groups is much easier. Simply login, visit the home page for the group.

(<http://forums.e-democracy.org/groups/frambors>) or (<http://forums.e-democracy.org/groups/framgov>), click the Join Forum button near the top, and select how much email you would like to receive from the group.

"I don't know my password. What should I do?"

Go to this page and follow the directions.

<https://edemocracy.zendesk.com/entries/21537281-I-lost-my-password-what-do-I-do->

"How can I reduce the number of emails I am receiving from these groups"

You can change your group membership so that you receive a daily digest email of topics. To change your membership:

- 1) Login to the forum (<http://forums.e-democracy.org/login.html>)
- 2) Click the link to your profile (upper right corner near your name)
- 3) Choose "Change Email Settings" from menu on the left
- 4) Scroll down to Group Notifications, then click Change on the row of the group you want to receive less email from.
- 5) Choose the type of messages (1/post, daily digest, & no messages – post Via web) that you want to receive from that group.

"How can I temporarily stop receiving emails without unsubscribing?"

Use the procedure listed above for reducing email. At the final step, select the “no messages” option. When you return, use the same process to begin receiving emails, but selecting the appropriate option.

“How do I leave a group?”

To leave a group, email the group address (see posting instructions below) and put "unsubscribe" in Subject (no quotes), or go to (<http://forums.e-democracy.org/groups/frambors>) or (<http://forums.e-democracy.org/groups/framgov>), click the “leave group” button near the top.

Posting Basics

“How do I post to the list?”

*** To start a new topic:**

1. Post using one of these two options:

Option 1: Compose a new email to framgov@forums.e-democracy.org or frambors@forums.e-democracy.org as appropriate.

Option 2: Log in to e-democracy and go to the appropriate forum (you will find a list of your groups if you click home). Look for the link to "start a new topic" and fill out the form that appears with the topic and the post.

*** To comment on an existing topic:**

Option 1 (available only to those who receive each email individually): Simply hit Reply-to-All and type your comments. It is considered good posting etiquette to reduce the quoted material from prior posts as much as possible, especially the footer material.

Option 2: Log in to e-democracy and go to the appropriate forum (you will find a list of your groups if you click home). Click on the link to the topic and fill out the "Add to Topic" form that appears at the bottom of the page and click submit.

“How do I delete or edit a post?”

As a matter of policy, we do not delete or edit posts once they have been made public. Deleting posts from the online forum, even ones that contain errors, causes confusion for members that already have an email version of the post. If you made an error in an earlier post, we recommend that you simply post an update/correction.

If you need to post an update or correction to the forum immediately and have already used your allotted posts, you can forward your correction to the forum manager, support@e-democracy.org, or someone else in your specific forum - and request that someone post a correction for you.

In some extreme cases or when required by law, E-Democracy.org will delete or remove material from your forums archive. For more information see: (http://pages.e-democracy.org/Forum_Content_and_Removal_Policy)

"How do I share files and pictures?"

On E-Democracy, members can choose to share pictures or other files with members of the group by attaching files to a post. If you want, you can attach files to an email. Alternatively, the Browse button that you encountered is the tool that allows members to attach pictures and files to a post if they choose to. If you want to share any files on your computer with the group, the Browse button allows you to select which files you want to attach and have published with the post.

If you do not want to share a file, then you do not have to do anything - E-Democracy only shares files when a user explicitly attaches a file to a post.

"How do I respond off-list to a post?"

People who choose to receive each post will have the email of the poster, even if they post as if it is a forum. For logged in web-users, you can click on the link to the person's profile, and then send a short message with a request for email contact.

"With email addresses being masked on the web, how do I put my e-mail contact information in my post so web users can respond?"

If you want to be highly accessible to web-only readers (daily digest users now read on the web), write your email in the message body like: clift (at) e-democracy.org

"Is this list moderated?"

E-Democracy.Org does not usually "moderate" or pre-approve messages to the forum except under the following circumstances:

* Moderation of New Members-Most forums temporarily "moderate" new members (or returning members) as a means of controlling SPAM and helping new members adjust to particular rules and expectation of our forums. This is only a temporary measure.

* Moderation Until Real Name in Profile-If you posted WITHOUT using your full real name as your display name (something set when you registered) as required by the rules of all participants, those posts will not be approved until you update your profile. Please login and update your profile -

<http://forums.e-democracy.org/login.html> - and re-post your message.

* Moderation for Cause-Also, Forum Managers have the authority to "moderate" an entire forum or a specific individual on a short term basis typically as a means of dealing with issues in the forum per the rules of local scope in a charter. Under such circumstances the Forum Manager should notify that individual or the entire forum of the fact that their messages are being temporarily moderated.

If you have questions about why your message has been moderated, please contact your Forum Manager or contact E-Democracy.org at: support@e-democracy.org

"Where else can I get information about policy and instructions for e-democracy.org, including rules on civility?"

E-democracy.org has a small Frequently Asked Question page at that might help. <https://edemocracy.zendesk.com/forums/20626368-faq-participation-in-forums>

If you are interested in the rules of conduct of participating on the group, you can go to the group home page (<http://forums.e-democracy.org/groups/frambors>), click the Policies tab in the left column, and find links to a few policy documents. They are a bit long, but they mostly boil down to "this is a public forum, treat others as you would like to be treated."

"How can I search for what I want from old posts?"

There is a search bar on the home page for the forum above the list of topics.

Privacy

"What do I need to include in my profile in order to post on this list?"

E-democracy.org requires that your profile include your real name (first name, last name, and full name) when posting. Your full name is used to sign all of your posts automatically.

You also need to put in the name of your "City." (Yes I know Framingham is a town, but that is the name of the field.)

It is also a good idea to make the time zone US (Eastern); otherwise the time stamp on your messages will be off to other recipients.

"What is public on this site?"

E-democracy's forums are open for public viewing. Anyone on the Web can view the posts. Search engines can (and do) index them. This is a significant privacy change. All of your posts are public and searchable.

"Does my email address show up anywhere to others?"

Not on our website. User email addresses are hidden on the website, and nobody outside of site administrators are allowed to see the email addresses of other users. Even email addresses that are part of a post will be obscured. However, if people are subscribed to the group and set to receive an email for each post that the group receives, then they will see the email address of anybody who makes a post.

"When a person posts to the forum what identification shows up for that poster?"

If somebody views the post on the website: the poster's first and last name, and a small photo if they have uploaded one. If somebody views the post via email: the poster's first and last name, and their email address.

Security

"Is this site safe? Why did I get a warning for denial of service (DNS)? Why was the site down on 2/4?"

E-democracy has been around for 18 years, and this is the first time they have ever had a DNS problem. Unfortunately, the site had some issues over the last few days between the negative impact that Yahoo's security problems have had on our groups (some background: <http://news.yahoo.com/why-yahoo-mail-accounts-being-hijacked-004126309.html> that shows we were not the only victim of this problem.) and hosting upgrades that have caused some downtime. The site is usually much, much more stable and consistent.

"You've said many yahoo accounts have been compromised. What should I do if I am a yahoo user to protect myself?"

Due to security concerns with "hacked" Yahoo.com email accounts E-democracy is considering blocking use of Yahoo.com email on E-Democracy. Stem the tide of spam by changing your password. This resource may help. <https://shouldichangemypassword.com/>.

"What does the site do to prevent spam?"

The site has a spam filter that traps thousands of emails. It also moderates first time users to ensure they are legitimate. E-democracy has strong policies against harvesting email and bulk mailing, and masks your email address on the web to prevent harvesting.

"What else can I do to prevent potential security problems?"

All of us have had friends whose email accounts have gotten hacked. The same may happen to e-democracy users, and if they are not moderated, their posts may go through. Beyond avoiding the well-known scams of the Nigerian ambassador

wanting you to hold his money, and the urgent email from the stranded traveler asking for money to be wired, you should use the same precautions you should take whenever you use emails.

Do not click on short messages with just web link. They tend to have "No Subject," "Hi," or "Hey" in the subject line. If it looks odd, just delete it. This is the worst spam assault via hacked email accounts in our 18 year history. Our server blocks thousands of attempted spam posts from non-users, but these messages appear to come from legitimate users.

Quality Postings

"What makes a quality post?"

The principles that guide these tips are simple: we want our e-mail list to be interesting, civil, and manageable. Interesting means posts that are on-topic and make for good reading. Civil means posts that treat list members with respect, though it doesn't rule out a good argument once in a while. Manageable means fewer e-mails are better than more if they say the same thing. We all have enough noise in our lives.

1. WRITE A CLEAR SUBJECT LINE. Be clear and specific about the subject matter of your post. With people subscribing to digest mode and only seeing those topic headings, a strong, clear topic heading is compelling. "Sofa in great condition for sale" is better than "What a bargain!" and "School budget concerns" is better than "Here we go again."
2. AVOID POSTS THAT SIMPLY AGREE WITH OTHER POSTS. Say why you agree, at the very least. Posts that simply agree with a previous message without contributing anything new to the discussion are called MEETOOs and are not welcome.
3. REDUCE THE QUOTED MATERIAL FROM THE POST YOU ARE REPLYING TO. Get rid of the footer, and anything non-essential.
4. PLEASE EDIT YOUR POST. When you reply to a message, please don't quote the entire previous message. Please take an extra few seconds to edit the amount of quoted material down to the bare minimum so that your reply will make sense. This especially helps the digest version of the list, where one long reply thread might fill a whole digest message.
5. CONSIDER ASKING FOR REPLIES TO GO TO YOU. If you're asking a question that is of limited interest, you might consider asking people to e-mail you directly. When you do this, you provide a very helpful service to the entire list, because you consolidate all the useful info into one message which can be saved if it's of interest, or skipped if it's not.

6. IF YOU ARE OFFERING A RECOMMENDATION, do not give a just name and an address. Explain the basis for the recommendation. What did they do for you?
7. ASK YOURSELF: WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE? Think about whether your message is of interest to the whole list, or just the person you're replying to. If it's just the person you're replying to, consider sending it just to that person rather than the whole list. Note that when you reply to a list message, by default your reply will go to the individual person; if you want it to go to the whole list, you'll need to edit the "To:" field of your reply. In any case, please note who your reply is going to and make it a conscious decision.
8. TAKE A DEEP BREATH. Did someone just say something that annoyed the \$#@! out of you? Don't you just want to write back to the whole list and tell them what you really think of them? Well, go ahead and write it! Just don't send it for a few hours or a day. Re-read it before you send it. Rewrite it so it's civil. We'll all appreciate your efforts.
9. Don't write in all capital letters. IT'S COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS SHOUTING. PEOPLE WHO READ IT WOULD ALWAYS PREFER TO READ MESSAGES THAT CAPITALIZE IN A PROPER FASHION. There. Isn't that better?