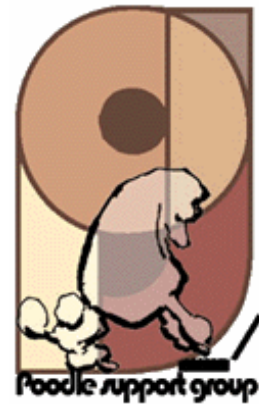


PSG History -- In the beginning...

Once upon a time, there were a bunch of Poodle lovers who communicated over the Internet. Many of the topics they discussed were controversial and sometimes the debate became heated. Following a particularly heated exchange, the listowner ejected one of the members of the group.

Others in the group saw the ejection as a threat to their own security and protested. Another was also ejected for questioning the authority of the listowner. Many others decide to leave of their own free will.



==Part 1=====

Steve Chin wrote:

You asked for it... I can certainly tell the beginning, as I was the first one to send any mail by way of a CC list (which was after I went off the air on "the other list" for reasons of my own). The first email was sent to Grace only. The next one was also sent to the three or four who immediately (and publically) protested Grace's ejection. A couple of hours later, there were more public protests, and those people were CC'd.

I think that in the first three hours we had 45 or so people in the mail list. We first carped about how unfair the whole thing was. Then we started talking Poodles. Then some people asked if friends could also be CC'd, so they were added to the CC list. Then some people wondered where some of the more vocal members of the "other list" went (the majority of the prolific post-makers either left the "other list" or got ejected; we were generating about three times the amount of email at that time in comparison to the "other list," and this was all done in CC form without the aid of a server), so these people were added to the CC list (if they wanted to be).

We formed a couple of committees to set policy and plan things, such as the search for a real server. The only places that we could find would charge us a monthly fee (most of these fees weren't too bad when looked at on a per-month basis, but annually, they looked pretty bad). So we started to look for server software when Greg Peddle said that he had some extra bandwidth on one of the servers at his company.

I think Greg should take it from here...

==Part 2=====

I came into work on Monday morning following the weekend Grace was removed from POODLE-L. I found a whole bunch of messages from all these fabulous Poodle folks I'd met. They were in a mess, CC:ing each other and basically trying to keep the group together.

As you might imagine, much of the discussion was devoted to "Can I be on the CC: list, too?".

Later on Sunday, Steve had started sending out an official list of email addresses for those who wanted 'IN'. He carefully assigned a version number to each list of addresses he sent out. There were three or four updates per day that weekend as folks scrambled to stay connected.

I had a server with a small Internet connection (28.8K) here at my business, so I consulted with my partners and they agreed that we could host the PSG (Steve had just coined the name) while we looked for a real home.

I put the newest version of the CC: list I could find on the server as an email alias. This would allow mail to be sent to the alias and free all the people from having to cut & paste the CC: list.

This worked well enough to stabilize the group that Monday morning. There were about 50 people on the list at that point.

The next search was to try and find a suitable permanent home for the list. It was suggested that a committee be formed for the purpose of finding this home and to serve as an authority for resolving disputes on the list, should any arise. This committee was called PSG-PLAN and it was just another email alias like PSG.

We tried several 'free' listservs, but they weren't taking new lists at that time. After about a month of searching, I had decided that the list probably wasn't going anywhere else too soon, so I proposed to the group that I could leave it there on my small server a bit longer. I also installed a listserv software package (Majordomo) to get me out of the job of editing the email alias to add/remove people from the list.

Majordomo was a big hit, because it got me out of a bunch of work and gave us a DIGEST version of the list.

Another month passed without finding a new home. I offered to leave the list on permanently if members would make a contribution to help defray the costs of the server and the connection. The people on this list stepped up and over the course of the next 6 months, we built up enough money to buy a separate PC to run the list on (about \$1000). Notable contributors were Jim Thompson, Bill Stern & Frances Collins, Eva LaGrisse, John Campbell, Susan Giordano, Connie Rodgers, Diane Laratta, Tom Reese, Candy Hume, Emily Cain, Jen Cooper, Joyce Perkins, Kay Kirkland, Peggy McDill, Audrey Hurdle, Carol Pernicka, Cathy Rainer, Debbie Gibbons, Dorothea Grace, Melissa Charron, Lyn Winer, Sheila Hirschfield and Diane Whitehouse.

Over the course of the summer of '97, I collected the money and when there was enough, I refitted a PC with a new components. Kathy Foran donated some RAM.

The new server went into operation last September. I wrote a new WWW site (PoodleWorld) for it that describes the operating philosophy and how any money collected is to be used. I registered the domain POODLE.ORG and moved the PSG over to the new server.

The server was moved to a different location when my ISP went bankrupt earlier this year. We had a few days of concern over that until it settled down in its new home.

Over time, people have continued to pledge small amounts here and there. The server currently costs about \$45/month to run. So far, I haven't had to pass the hat very often. People on the list have pledged enough to keep things going.

In addition to reading everything that is posted to the list, I also receive all the spam and returned mail messages for the list. This adds up to several hundred messages per day.

Over time, I've modified Majordomo to be a little smarter about things like HTML and attachments. This seems to be working pretty well. I added a Majordomo WWW page to make it easier for people to subscribe and unsubscribe.

The joy of PSG has always been the level of involvement that other people bring to the community. The pain of PSG has always been the difficulty in making that communication easy.

To the immense credit of the people here, the PSG has remained a great list. It has to, or the people who make it great will pack up and leave. The common currency we spend here is our attention.

Back to how we started... think about it, we didn't have a home, we didn't have DIGEST versions, and we were terribly concerned that some of those folks we'd left behind would be coming around to try and stir up trouble for us.

In a weird way, those days were quite romantic. We were a bunch of rebels who were succeeding at creating our own reality.

We still are, but now we have to maintain the community on two levels: people who have been around and know the way it works, and people who are just joining and need help to figure it out. These categories aren't specific to a particular topic -- there are new people to computers and new people to Poodles here, and there always will be.

What has PSG taught me? It's taught me that:

- Important jobs are never finished.
- People will rise to your expectations.
- A kind word and a deep breath are often all that is necessary to get along.
- I don't want to be a breeder.
- The Internet is an amazing way to communicate and educate people around all around the world.