

# Getting Started with Massmail

This document contains the following sections:

- [Introduction](#)
- [The Basics](#)
- [Mail Merge Feature](#)
- [Options](#)
- [Web-based Massmail](#)

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**For information related to this topic refer to:**

- [Sending Mail to Groups](#)  
(<http://www.cmu.edu/computing/email/mail-to-groups/index.html>)
- [Using Mailman Lists](#)  
(<http://www.cmu.edu/computing/doc/email/mailman/index.html>)
- [Using Distribution Lists \(dlists\)](#)  
(<http://www.cmu.edu/computing/doc/email/dlists/index.html>)

*Last Updated: 10/10/07*

## Introduction

Massmail is a UNIX-based program that provides a way to send text messages to larger groups of users quickly and efficiently. Advantages of massmail over an email client is:

- Users can reply to the sender individually without that reply being sent to all other users on the list.
- Massmail allows for simple customization of each outgoing message with the mailmerge feature.

**IMPORTANT:** Adhere to the following when using massmail:

- Messages sent with massmail should be university-related business. Make sure that your recipients will not consider your message as "spamming." If you are not sure if you will be using massmail appropriately, read the [Guidelines for Bulk Email Distribution \(http://www.cmu.edu/iso/governance/guidelines/bulk-email.html\)](http://www.cmu.edu/iso/governance/guidelines/bulk-email.html) available from the [Information Security Office \(http://www.cmu.edu/iso/index.html\)](http://www.cmu.edu/iso/index.html) web site.
- Messages sent to less than 200 people may be sent at anytime. Messages to be sent to more than 200 people and/or larger messages should be sent during off-peak times (i.e., before 7:00 AM, on weekdays while classes are in session).
- Messages sent using massmail should be sent to a test list of users prior to sending to the entire list. This assures that the correct message and output are being sent.

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## The Basics

In order to use massmail to send out the same piece of e-mail to all the users, you will need two text files.

1. A text file of all the e-mail addresses. Each e-mail address should be on a separate line.  
Note: Listing the userIDs alone will NOT work. You must have the full email addresses.
2. A text file of the e-mail message that you would like to send.

These text files can either be generated using a text editor on UNIX such as emacs or can be generated on your Macintosh or PC and then transferred over to your Andrew UNIX account. The files should be located in the same directory (this can be your private directory if you do not want others to be able to view your files).

**Mac Users Note:** When creating the text files on a Mac, sometimes the text editor will insert odd characters (m-lines) that are invisible to see, but that cause errors when running massmail. Follow the steps in the [Mac User Note](#) section to remove the "m-lines."

Once you have created the appropriate text files, follow these steps to then send the message:

1. Connect to a UNIX server via an authenticated telnet program such as NiftyTelnet or by using an SSH (secure shell) client.
2. Change into the directory which has your files. Massmail uses the following syntax:
 

**% massmail user\_file subject message\_file**

  - user\_file is the file name of the text file which contains the list of users that you would like to send the message to
  - subject is the subject of the e-mail message. The subject should appear in double-quotes.
  - message\_file is the file name of the text file which contains the e-mail message itself

For example, if your users list is in the file named staff.txt your message is in the file named announcement.txt, and you would like the subject line to appear as "Special Announcement from the Provost", you should type the following at the UNIX prompt:

```
% massmail staff.txt "Special Announcement from the Provost"
announcement.txt
```

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## Mail Merge Feature

The massmail program allows you to send more personalized e-mail messages using the mail merge feature. For example, if you need to send a group of people the date that each person will be moving into a new office along with their new office number, you can use the mail merge feature as shown:

1. Create the data file. The text file that contains the userids will also contain a tab delimited list of the information for each individual user. The first column in your userid text file must be the list of userids or e-mail addresses and will be who massmail sends out e-mail to. Subsequent columns will be the data for your file.  
**ju33 Joe User December 3rd, 2000 Cyert 363**  
**yk22 Yerin Kay December 4th, 2000 Cyert 362**  
**dw3x Doug Wonder December 5th, 2000 Cyert 352**  
**bc2t Brian Cable December 5th, 2000 Cyert 322**
2. Create the message file. The message file in a mail merge will reference items in your userid file by column number. The first column is represented by %0%, the second column %1%, etc.  
 For example, using the above data, you can compose a message similar to the following:  
 Hello %1%,  
 You will be moving on %2% to %3%. If you have any questions, reply back to this mail message.  
 The message that the user receives will appear as such:  
 Hello Joe User,  
 You will be moving on December 3rd, 2000 to Cyert 363. If you have any questions, reply back to this mail message.
3. To send the message, type  
`% massmail --merge datafile.txt "This will be your subject" messagefile.txt`  
**Note:** Without the --merge, your e-mail will not be processed as a mail merge.

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## Options

The massmail program also offers the following additional options:

**-f <bounceaddr>**

Specifies the address where bounces should be directed. This is not the Reply-to address or the From address and can not be set inside the message header. (defaults to current user)

**-r <reply-to>**

Sets the "Reply-to" address inside the message header.

**-n, --noop**

Suppress actually sending mail. Instead, show what messages would be sent out. This is useful for testing mail merge results.

**-v, --verbose**

Print out status reports as processing continues.

**-e, --embed, --headers**

Instructs massmail to expect headers to be embedded in the message, separated by an empty line. These headers can override the standard headers.

For example, if you would like to make it appear that your supervisor sent the e-mail, but would like all replies to go to you, you can set the headers in the message file as such:

```
From: Supervisor Name <supervisoruserid@andrew.cmu.edu>
Reply-To: Your Name <youruserid@andrew.cmu.edu>
Subject: Special Announcement from the Provost
```

**The message will then go here.**

Then, when you use massmail, make sure to include the --headers option as such:

```
% massmail --headers userfile.txt "subjectline goes here" messagefile.txt
```

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## Using the Web-based Massmail System

To use the web-based massmail system, you will first need to create a text file of all the email addresses. Each email address must be on a separate line. For Carnegie Mellon email addresses be sure to include @andrew.cmu.edu. This text file can be generated using a text editor on your local machine. When you are ready to send the massmail message, you can browse and select this file.

**Mac Users Note:** When creating the text files on a Mac, sometimes the text editor will insert odd characters (m-lines) that are invisible to see, but that cause errors when running massmail. Follow the steps in the [Mac User Note](#) section to remove the "m-lines."

Once you have created the text file of email addresses, follow these steps to send the message:

1. Go to <https://massmail.andrew.cmu.edu/> (<https://massmail.andrew.cmu.edu/>)  
If a certificate window appears, select **accept this certificate**, and click **ok**.
2. Select **send a massmail**
3. At the **Name** box, enter a name for saving the massmail text. For example, "testing massmail".
4. At the **Subject** box, enter what you would like to have as the subject line for the outgoing email message.
5. At **Mergefile**, select **Choose File**, and browse your machine for your previously created text file of userids.

## Massmail 2

### Send massmail: Step 1

**Name:**

**Subject:**

**Mergefile:**  no file selected

[Show extra headers](#)

**Body:**

6. Select **Show extra headers** to expand the header options if you would like to input different email addresses for From, Reply-To, and Bounce.

- **To** - leave these lines blank if you are merging the information from the text file.
- **From** - this line defaults to the userid and name used from the WebISO login. Enter the name you would like to have seen on the first line, and the email address on the second line.
- **Reply-to** - enter the email address you would like to have any responses to the email sent to, such as "advisor@andrew.cmu.edu".
- **Bounce** - enter the email address that is to receive notification if any email addresses bounce. Typically this would be the actual person sending the mail.

<b>To:</b>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
<b>From:</b>	<input type="text" value="My Department"/>
	<input type="text" value="mydepartment@andrew.cmu.edu"/>
<b>Reply-To:</b>	<input type="text" value="mydepartment@andrew.cmu.edu"/>
<b>Bounce:</b>	<input type="text" value="joeuser@andrew.cmu.edu"/>

7. At the **Body** window, type or paste in the message you would like to send.
8. Select **continue**.
9. Review the randomly selected messages. Select **send** if they are acceptable, or select **back** to edit the message.

# Massmail 2

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## Send massmail: Step 2

Please review the randomly selected messages below and click 'Send' to changes.

[Show full headers](#)

**To:** `juser@andrew.cmu.edu`

```
From: My Department <mydepartment@andrew.cmu.edu>  
Subject: Testing Massmail Documentation  
  
Testing for documentation
```

**To:** `joeuser@andrew.cmu.edu`

```
From: My Department <mydepartment@andrew.cmu.edu>  
Subject: Testing Massmail Documentation  
  
Testing for documentation
```

10. A progress bar will be displayed, which will reach 100% when complete.

You can also view previously sent mass mail announcements by selecting **view previous emails** on the first page of the website.

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## Mac User Note

When creating the text files on a Mac, sometimes the text editor will insert odd characters (m-lines) that are invisible to see, but that cause errors when running the massmail command.

To determine if your file has these m-lines, after your text file has been created and saved on your computer, open **Application/Utilities/Terminal** and type in the following commands at the prompt:

```
% cd file_folder
% more file_name.txt
```

If your file has **^M** anywhere in the text, it will be highlighted. If there are no **^M** identified, your file is clean and ready to upload. In case of **^M** markers, enter the following at the prompt:

```
% tr \015 \012 < file_name.txt > temp
% mv temp file_name.txt
```

- "file\_folder" is the name of the directory or folder on your computer where the text files are located.
- "file\_name.txt" is the name of the text file you are modifying.

For example, if you were modifying a file named "announcement.txt", which was stored in a folder named "Provost" on the desktop, you would type the following:

```
% cd Desktop/Provost
% more announcement.txt
% tr \015 \012 < announcement.txt > temp
% mv temp announcement.txt
```

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