

Implement and Manage a Club E-mail Group

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Take advantage of the electronic age by forming a camera club e-mail group. Both Yahoo and Google offer free group services and an e-mail group allows a mere click of a mouse, and notices, announcements, reminders and weather alerts can be sent to all club member!

Using Yahoo as an example, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/>. Click on "Start your group." Under category, type in "Photography" and there will be given a choice of groups. Choose *Entertainment Arts: Fine Arts: Visual Arts: Photography*. If the club is a specialized group, such as photojournalism or nature, there will be a class in the list that further refines the category that applies to the club. Click on the desired group and click on "Place My Group Here."

Decide on a name for the group, then enter the selected group e-mail address. Be prepared with 3 different addresses and try to keep them simple. For example OceanCamClub@yahoogroups.com would be a viable address. Be prepared to describe the group which will appear at the top of the group page and will be sent to prospective members.

In step three, it will be necessary to create a Yahoo profile for the leader. This step will establish the moderator and that individual will need a free Yahoo e-mail address and password. It is a good idea to have an assistant moderator who can be added at a later date. The moderator must be a person who knows how to send an e-mail, and upload and download files. It is also essential that this person be willing to refer to the online help available and have the ability to follow instructions.

(There may be some differences in the above directions due to the various ways different browsers present material, but essentially all of the above steps are very clear and intuitive on the Yahoo web page.)

Be dogged and tenacious in recruiting established club members as some members will resist the idea of an e-mail group. (It may take as long as a year to

get everyone with an e-mail address to sign up, but new members should be signed up automatically. Assure the club members that SPAM is not a problem as both Yahoo and Google keep their lists private. At the end of each e-mail there will be advertisements—these are a small price to pay for this free service.

The group is now ready to create the membership list. Go to the home page and click on members. A new page will open and on top will be seen "Invite members." Click on that. Scroll to the bottom of the next page and click on "Add members." In the dialogue boxes that open an e-mail list can be created. There is even an example to work with. It is more efficient to "add" members rather than to "invite" members.

There are two ways that the club can use the newly formed e-mail group. The first method is to treat it exclusively as an e-mail group and the second method is to avail the club of all of the options offered by the Yahoo group.

If the club chooses to use it exclusively as an email group, then use the following suggestions: (1) the moderator can restrict the e-mails so that when a member clicks on the reply button, the e-mail goes to the moderator or to the person who sent the e-mail. (2) In order to reduce unwanted e-mail, jokes and the like, set up a rule where the moderator is the only one that will send e-mails. This is the model that the Ocean Camera Club has successfully used for two years.

The second method has been used by the PhotoEditors (PE) group since 2001. Any member can send an e-mail and any responses are sent to the whole group. This enables the group to have online discussions, share opinions and experience. Furthermore, if one goes to the Home Page at <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/PhotoEditors/> on the left side there are a series of options which include: Messages, Files, Photos, Links, Database, Polls, Members and Calendar. All of these links may be used to their fullest potential.

In *Messages*, every e-mail sent to or from the group is saved. *Files* is an area where files can be uploaded and saved for the group to refer to. In the PE group this is where articles meant to be shared in newsletters are kept. Photos can be uploaded which might be the winning competition photos from the club. *Links* is an area where one can upload the club's favorite links. This could include <http://www.psa-photo.org/> or links to individual club members' web sites. *Polls* make it possible to create an online poll soliciting opinions. *Members* is where every one in the group and their e-mail address is listed. By simply right-clicking on an e-mail address, one can send a private e-mail to a member of the group. *Calendar* makes it possible to post the club's annual schedule of events.

Note: for any individual member of the group to access these features, a Yahoo screen name and password will have to be created. This will ensure the group's privacy.

Essentially, in using the second method, you will have all of the information that might be included in a genuine website, but, it will be presented as lists and it will not be as attractive as a true website. Nevertheless, it remains a great tool and option for a club that does not have a website.

Successful groups use their e-mails to send reminders announcing speakers and programs, special events and weather closings. It is possible to use attachments in e-mails (examples: the club newsletter, competition rules or how to resize images for the web). There will no longer be a need to copy documents and hand them out at meetings. The club will grow to love its e-mail group, and it will be common to hear members say, "Thanks for the reminder." Best of all, although this procedure has many steps, it is relatively easy to implement and once a group is up and running, the members will be glad that an effort was made to create a camera club e-mail group. 🌐