

THE USE OF E-GROUPS (LISTSERVE MAILING LIST) FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VETERINARY PROFESSION IN NIGERIA.

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SUMMARY

The advent of the Internet has opened diverse opportunities for sharing and exchange of information rapidly to a worldwide audience. One of such opportunities is the possibility of creating electronic mailing list (or e-group) containing several hundreds or even thousands of e-mail addresses. E-groups have the distinct advantage that a message need not be sent to the individual e-mail addresses but to a single address and yet immediately get posted to all members. The Yahoo ISP has some 180 e-groups on veterinary related topics including nigeriavetphmforum, newly created by the author. The latter is aimed at promoting interactive veterinary public health and preventive medicine activities, information dissemination and education on relevant issues globally. The paper sheds some light on existing veterinary related e-groups, how to assess or join them and how to create new e-groups for the development of veterinary profession.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has provided various opportunities for rapid access to and sharing of information worldwide. One of such opportunity is the use of listserv/ mailing list/ electronic group (or e-group). The listserv is actually a program written by Eric Thomas and the e-mail commands are sent to a machine rather than a person. The machine automatically sends the mail to everyone on the mailing list. Its distinct advantage is that you could share worldwide through electronic mail what you will need a conference of persons to do. This is particularly relevant to professional sub-groups and groups of persons (e.g. students) with common interests.

Originally, the e-group existed as a separate service provider, but in 2001, it merged with Yahoo and became Yahoo e-group. Membership of a group can vary from a digit to thousands. By subscribing to an e-group, one can discuss with interested persons on a specific topic. It is a useful way to make contacts with experts in distant parts of the world (CARL-L).

Subscribers can discuss health, current events, and more; share photos and files, plan events and stay in touch with friends, family and professional colleagues worldwide.

An e-group listserv can be opened, in which any person could join, or closed in which you have to prove you have the

necessary qualification to join. Also it may be moderated or non-moderated. In the former, a moderator (usually the list-creator), reads over any message sent and ensures its relevance to the group, before approving it for circulation to members. In the non-moderated version, anything

posted by any subscriber is directly circulated.

Veterinary-related listservs

There are some 127 different types of veterinary related e-groups on Yahoo (Table I). There are other veterinary related e-groups which are not on Yahoo (Table II).

TABLE I: Veterinary related listserv on Yahoo

1. E-VeT:	A messaging service for veterinarians who would like to discuss clinical and professional matters. It is one of the most active worldwide web veterinary e-groups with 2,520 subscribers from 98 countries. It is restricted to registered members. <i>Contact address:</i> http://www.e-vet.com , e-vet@yahoogroups.com .
2. FIV-Cats:	A discussion group for caretakers with cats who are living with FIV or Feline immunosuppressive virus. <i>Contact address:</i> Fiv-cats@yahoogroups.com .
3. LoveBigDogs	A place for people who love their dogs. <i>Contact address:</i> LoveBigDogs@yahoogroups.com .
4. Vpg2002:	A discussion group for veterinarians in swine medicine. <i>Contact address:</i> Vpg2002@yahoogroups.com .
5. CalPreVet	A group in which UC Berkeley students can network to find out more about veterinary medicine and the process of admission into a veterinary school. <i>Contact address:</i> CalPreVet@yahoogroups.com .
6. equineveterinarymedicine	a group for veterinarians, students and horse owners to discuss equine medicine, and horses in general. It has 445 members. <i>Contact address:</i> equineveterinarymedicine@yahoogroups.com .
7. prevetmed	group designed for Veterinary Medicine students who are eager to share their experiences with animals. <i>Contact address:</i> prevetmed@yahoogroups.com .
8. elkmed	closed discussion group for veterinarians and veterinary students interested in specialized livestock medicine (bison, deer and elk). The purpose is to stimulate discussion, disseminate knowledge and facilitate learning in specialized livestock medicine surgery and pathobiology. All messages are sent as e-mails. <i>Contact address:</i> elkmed@yahoogroups.com .
9. docswithdogs	A list of doctors (of medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, etc) who are involved in the hobby of training, breeding, or showing dogs.

TABLE II: Other Veterinary related listerv not on Yahoo

<p>1. ProMED-mail</p> <p><i>Site address:</i></p>	<p>(www.promed.org) The program for monitoring emerging diseases is an electronic outbreak reporting system that monitors infectious diseases globally. ProMED-Mail is a central site for up-to-date information and discussions on emerging and re-emerging diseases that affect human health. The group contributed to the definitive diagnosis of the recent outbreak of African Swine Fever in Nigeria (Babalobi <i>et al.</i>, 2003).</p> <p>promed@promed.org</p>
<p>2. FAO vetpublic health list</p> <p><i>Site address:</i></p>	<p>vph-l@mailserv.fao.org</p>
<p>3. EPIVET-L</p> <p><i>Site address:</i></p>	<p>Veterinary Epidemiology Discussion List - forum for veterinary epidemiologists.</p> <p>listproc@upei.ca Moderator: Liz Spangler, DVM, PhD spangler@upei.ca.</p>
<p>4. VETLIB-L</p> <p><i>Site address:</i></p>	<p>Veterinary Librarians Discussion group - forum for librarians in schools and colleges of veterinary medicine world-wide.</p> <p>listserv@vtvm1.cc.vt.edu Moderator: Victoria Kok (kok@vtvm1.cc.vt.edu).</p>
<p>5. VetGate</p> <p><i>Site address:</i></p>	<p>offers free access to a searchable catalogue of quality reviewed Internet resources in Animal Health. The database is updated weekly.</p> <p>http://vetgate.ac.uk/</p>
<p>6. Biome</p>	<p><i>Site address:</i> http://biome.ac.uk/</p>
<p>7. PubMed</p> <p><i>Site address:</i></p>	<p>Free access to MEDLINE and Pre-MEDLINE provided by the National Library of Medicine (NLM). It is the NLM's premier bibliographic database, containing more than 14 million citations and abstracts from more than 4,000 biomedical journals published in the United States and in 70 other countries.</p> <p>http://www.ncbi.nlm.gov/entrez/</p>
<p>8. International Veterinary Information Service (IVIS)</p> <p><i>Site address:</i></p>	<p>The goal of IVIS is to publish relevant, up-to-date veterinary information quickly and makes its publications available free, through electronic distribution, to veterinarians around the world. The IVIS publications target all groups and disciplines of veterinary medicine. Contributions are written in English.</p> <p>http://www.ivis.org/home.asp</p>
<p>9. The ELDIS mailing list</p>	<p><i>Site address:</i> (www.eldis.org).</p>
<p>10. Dog-Related e-mail Lists</p> <p><i>Site address:</i></p>	<p>contains the list of hundreds of dog related e-groups. Puppies/ Senior dogs/ Single dog owners/ Shy dogs/ tick. Mailing List/ veterinary list.</p> <p>http://www.irishdog.ie/information/ dog-related e-mail lists.htm</p>

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11. **VetScape Internet Network** links you to a list of veterinary e-groups, mailing and discussion group. It was established in 1994 and now many megabytes.
Site address: (www.vetscape.co.uk).
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12. **The WWW Virtual Library - Veterinary Medicine Page** began operation on December 7, 1994. Lists 55 Veterinary mailing lists.
Site address: (http://netvet.wustl.edu/vetmed.htm). *Moderator:* Dr. Ken Boschert, DVM, Associate Director of the Washington University Division of Comparative Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri.
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13. **CLIVE Computer-assisted Learning in Veterinary Education - Discussion list** about CAL in veterinary education.
Site address: mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk *Moderator:* Dr. Andrew D. Short (adshort@ed.ac.uk).
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14. **IVSA International Veterinary Students Association - mailing list** open to all IVSA members to provide better communication among veterinary students.
Site address: listproc@bagan.srce.hr *Moderator:* (human-ivsa@bagan.srce.hr).
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14. **VETCAL-L** - Discussion forum for computer-assisted instruction in veterinary medicine.
Site address: listserv@ksuvm.ksu.edu *Moderator:* Wayne Michaels
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15. **VETIMM** - Discussion forum for veterinary immunology topics.
Site address: listproc@lists.umass.edu *Moderator:* Cynthia Baldwin
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16. **VETINFO** - forum for topics related to Veterinary Informatics, including clinical decision support systems, laboratory information management, imaging, disease nomenclature, coding systems, expert systems, knowledge bases, the Internet and WWW, etc. Also known as AVI-L since this is the official listserv for the Association for Veterinary Informatics. Archives of this mailing list are available.
Site address: listserv@wvumc.wustl.edu *Moderator:* Ken Boschert, (ken@wudem.wustl.edu) and James T. Case, Ph.D (jcase@cvdls.ucdavis.edu).
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17. **VETLINK** Veterinary Professional Mailing List - Electronic forum for veterinarians, physicians, and professional fields to discuss topics of interest in veterinary medicine.
Site address: *Moderator:* SCIVAC in Florence, Italy
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18. **VETMED** - Forum for students, professionals, and others employed in or interested in veterinary issues.
Site address: listserv@iupui.edu.
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19. **VETMICRO** Discussion group for veterinary microbiology.
Site address: listserv@cvdls.ucdavis.edu *Moderator:* James T. Case, DVM, PhD (jcase@cvdls.ucdavis.edu).

20. **VETPLUS-L** The list is limited to people involved in veterinary and human medical practice, research, or teaching to discuss animal health care and management. An application is required.

Site address: listproc@u.washington.edu *Moderator:* Jeff Parke, jeffp@vetmed.wsu.edu) or Allan Berger, DVM (alb2@cornell.edu).

21. **VETSTU-L** A forum for Veterinary Students for general discussions.

Site address: listserv@uga.cc.uga.edu *Moderator:* Fred Smith, (smith.f@calc.vet.uga.edu)

THE NIGERIAN VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE FORUM

(Website:<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/nigeriavetphpmforum>)

There had been several failed attempts to form an association of Nigerian veterinarians in veterinary public health and preventive medicine. These are mainly due to the logistics of reaching them in different parts of Nigeria. The formation of an e-group of veterinarians in that field is an effective step in overcoming that barrier.

In this regard, this author formed this Yahoo e-group discussion forum, the nigeriavetphpmforum@yahoo.com. It is a professional e-group forum aimed at promoting interactive veterinary public health and preventive medicine activities, information dissemination and education on relevant issues within Nigeria and beyond. Now anyone with access to internet facilities could be easily reached and communicated with. Members of this group can send messages to the entire group using just one its e-mail address.

Membership is open to all veterinarians involved in epizootiology, veterinary public health and preventive medicine, whether in public, private, academic or research fields.

Group e-mail Addresses

Post message:

nigeriavetphpmforum@yahoo.com

Subscribe: nigeriavetphpmforumsubscribe@yahoo.com

Unsubscribe:

nigeriavetphpmforumunsubscribe@yahoo.com

List owner: nigeriavetphpmforumowner@yahoo.com

Group information

Members: 24

Founded: Jun 27, 2003

Language: English

Group settings

- Listed in directory

- Open membership

- Non-moderated

- All members may post

- Archives for members only

- E-mail attachments are permitted.

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Post message:

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Subscribe: nigeriavetphpmforum-subscribe@yahoo.com

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nigeriavetphpmforum-unsubscribe@yahoo.com

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HOW TO ACCESS, JOIN OR START AN E-GROUP.

This can be achieved by a (google) web search for existing e-groups, sending a subscription e-mail to existing group or by starting your own group. An e-group listserv could be created by anyone, with or without an e-mail address, with any of the major Internet Service Provider ISP (e.g. Yahoo) and it is free.

To access Yahoo e-groups

1. Link to the yahoo website or simply type <http://groups.yahoo.com> or www.yahogroups.com.
2. If you are not a registered yahoo group user, you will be given the option given to first register.

Subscription

There is a search option for those who wish to join or be linked to an existing group. You simply follow the instructions given.

Subscription is by three ways:

1. The list owner adds you directly using your e-mail address.
2. The list owner invites you to join the list by sending an e-mail to you.
3. Send an e-mail message to the Site address and in the body of the message, enter: subscribe, Firstname, Lastname Contact: the site of the e-group for more information.

Create your own e-group.

If you wish to start a new group, you click on the "start a new group option" and you

will be taken through a step-by-step process to create the group. This should be completed in less than 30 minutes.

You can then use the membership management key to either invite people to join using their e-mail addresses, or add e-mail addresses of your colleagues, which you have already added to the membership list. The yahoo prefers that you invite people rather than adding their addresses without their consent. It would be considered an abuse by Yahoo if such people report and the group may be deactivated.

CONCLUSION

With internet access now becoming easier, veterinarians in the various sub-professional fields in the academia, private and public sectors are encouraged to form e-groups for the purposes of sharing relevant information and keeping abreast of developments in their fields.

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[Http://: www.yahogroups.com/VeterinaryMedicine.](http://www.yahogroups.com/VeterinaryMedicine)