



## MRI Technologist List Serve

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The MRI Technologist List Serve is hosted by the Section for Magnetic Resonance Technologists (SMRT). A list serve or *list serv* is a simple system that allows persons with like or similar interests to actively communicate with one another via e-mail. The list serve works by distributing all messages sent to it to all subscribers of the list. Responses can be made back directly to the specific person who posed the questions or to the whole list allowing everyone to benefit from the answers. The MRI Technologist List Serve is a closed list designed specifically for issues and topics related to MRI scanning.

### Guidelines to E-Communication Etiquette

**Be Polite and Think Before You Send** This is the single most important caveat to remember when composing e-mail. Because e-mail is so simple and quick, it's easy to respond without thinking a great deal about what you intend to say. Avoid the mistake of replying hastily and less politely than you would say in face-to-face conversation or on the telephone--when you probably would take a moment to consider what you want to say. Remember, you want to achieve a certain effect with an e-mail message, just as you do with any form of human communication. Don't be fooled by the ease of firing off a message electronically! That message still represents you to your recipient, and it should represent you well.

**Capitol Letters** Avoid typing your messages in all capital letters because IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING! Most people find this very irritating. Using all lowercase letters is not viewed quite so disparagingly, but many e-mail users dislike this technique as much as all caps.

**Professionalism** As in all correspondence, professionalism needs to be reflected for ourselves as well as our organization.

**Efficiency:** E-mails that are directed to the correct individual, that are to the point, and properly worded are more efficient and more likely to receive a response.

### E-Mail Etiquette Tips

**Subject Lines** Use the subject line to help the receiver quickly identify what is being sent. With the volume of e-mails that we all receive, being able to scan subject lines quickly helps us determine which messages may be a higher priority and need immediate attention.

**Be Concise** Don't make the message longer than it needs to be. Match your message length to the essence of the communi-

cation. If it's a quick query, keep it short and to the point.

**Format** Keep to plain, straight running text. Many e-mail programs can't interpret special formatting in messages and can cause problems. Just because you can doesn't mean you should.

**Proper Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation** This should go without saying. Take the time to read the message before it is sent. Don't write in capitals – remember it is commonly interpreted as yelling. Keep the punctuation useful.

**Be Courteous** E-mail is all about communication, so use some basic courtesy. If you're asking for something, it never hurts to say please. Similarly, if someone has done something for you, it is nice to follow with a thank you. E-mail seems less formal and some people also feel it is ok to be abrupt, short and sometimes rude. If you wouldn't say it to their face, don't put it in an e-mail

**Use Signatures** This is just another form of communication so complete your message with your "signature" that states name, title, organization, and contact information to appropriately identify yourself. You can send a note to the list requesting that you receive messages in a Digest Mode format. This is if you want list messages grouped to show up in your mailbox twice a day versus showing up in real-time.

### Other Points to Consider

- **E-mail messages are public records** Don't be fooled by the illusion of privacy even on a "closed" list. Don't commit anything to e-mail that you wouldn't want to become public knowledge. With that said, messages posted on the MRI Technologist list serve should not be forwarded or copied to anyone outside the list without the author's permission.

- **Be careful with your use of humor and sarcasm** The reader might not understand your intention. What is humorous to you may be offensive to others. Use labels, explanatory notes, or emoticons to alert the recipient that a message is meant to be taken humorously. Facial expressions, voice inflection and other cues that help recipients to interpret a message are absent from e-mail. Keep in mind that the MRI Technologist List Serve has members from many countries. Don't assume that everyone will understand a reference to TV, movies, pop culture, or current events in your country. If you must use the reference, please explain it.

- **Avoid sending e-mail in anger or as an emotional response** It is best not to send these kinds of messages over e-mail. Such situations are better worked out in person or in another forum. If you are caught in an argument or disagreement, keep the discussion focused on issues rather than the personalities involved. If you receive a message or posting that generates negative feelings, set it aside and read it later. An im-

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mediate response is often a hasty response. Re-read your e-mail for content and tone before you send it to the list. Don't rule out the possibility that a misunderstanding or misinterpretation might occur. It is common with e-mail because of the lack of physical cues.


- **Disagreement with one person** If you should find yourself in a disagreement with one person, make your responses to each other via individual e-mail rather than continue to send messages to the list or the group. If you are debating a point on which the group might have some interest, you may summarize for them later.

- **Don't over-distribute e-mail** Every message you send creates work for someone else who must read, consider, and deal with the message. Take the time to edit any quotations down to the minimum necessary to provide context for your reply. Nobody likes reading a long message in quotes for the third or fourth time, only to be followed by a one line response: "Yeah, me too."

When replying to a posted message, check the e-mail address to be certain it's going to the intended location (person). It can be

very embarrassing if they reply incorrectly and post a personal message to the entire list serve that was intended for an individual.

- **Be brief and to the point** Messages and articles should be brief and to the point. Don't wander off-topic, don't ramble, and don't send e-mail or post messages solely to point out other people's errors in typing or spelling.

In summary, many MRI technologists have expressed that the list is very beneficial to them. But, please keep in mind that the focus of the list is to share information specific to MRI. Posts and responses that are not directly related to this mission should not be sent to the list. If you wish to respond individually, that is your choice. The SMRT leadership addresses any inappropriate posts off-list. Please keep your questions and comments relevant to the focus of MRI scanning related topics. Happy listing! 

*Thanks to Jennifer Olson, Associate Executive Director, ISMRM; Carolyn Bonaceto, SMRT President; Charles Stanley, SMRT Executive Board Member; and Sally Moran, Director of Electronic Communications, ISMRM for their contributions to this article.*

## List Serve Prompts

**The MRI Technologist List Serve is hosted by the Section for Magnetic Resonance Technologists (SMRT).  
<http://www.ismrm.org/smrt>**

**To subscribe to the MRI-Technologist List Serve, just fill out the online form on the SMRT website.**

**To change your email address or halt participation in this listserv, please contact: [mr\\_tech\\_list@ismrm.org](mailto:mr_tech_list@ismrm.org)**

**For instructions on how to use this list, please go to <http://www.ismrm.org/aboutlists.htm>**

**You can send a note to the list requesting that you receive messages in a Digest Mode format. You can decide that you want list messages to show up in your mailbox all at once, once a day or twice a day.**

**List serve members can review the archives for previous and current posts. To gain access to the MRI Technologist List Serve Archives:**

**1) Send an email from the e-mail address you have registered with this list serve to: [MRI\\_Technologist-confirm@ismrm.org](mailto:MRI_Technologist-confirm@ismrm.org)**

**You will receive an automated email back with a confirmation ID number in the subject line of the email, as well as some nonessential language in the email itself, though it will repeat the confirmation ID number.**

**2) Then when you go to [http://mailserver.ismrm.org:8100/Lists/MRI\\_Technologist/List.html](http://mailserver.ismrm.org:8100/Lists/MRI_Technologist/List.html)**

**You will be prompted for a user name and password. It should be as follows:**

**User Name: Your email address**

**Password: The confirmation ID number**

**This will allow you into the archives.**

**Any specific questions or issues with the MRI Technologist List Serve, please contact Sally Moran, Director of Electronic Communications, ISMRM / SMRT at the following e-mail address: [Sally@ismrm.org](mailto:Sally@ismrm.org)**