Sympa a mailing list server for universities

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Sympa a mailing list server for universities

Universities are not happy with Majordomo, Mailman, Lyris or Listserv

Why?

- They don't provide a complete set of features
- They are not designed to integrate with universities services

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Complete set of features

- Web interface has become the main user interface (like Yahoo groups)
- Sympa features:
  - subscription
  - archives
  - bounces (VERP)
  - moderation
  - list creation and configuration
  - server administration
  - virtual hosting…
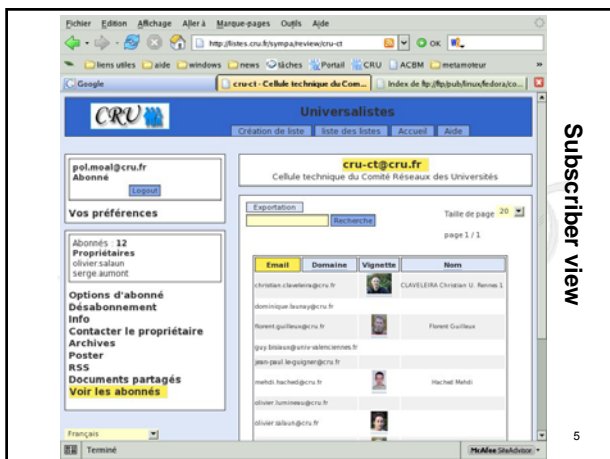 - groupware: shared document repository

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Sympa web interface

- Web interface automatically adapted according to user privileges
  - listmaster, list owner, subscriber
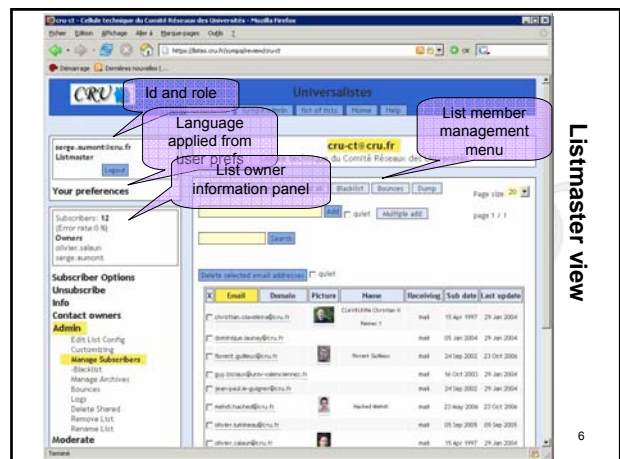- Example: "Review members" page
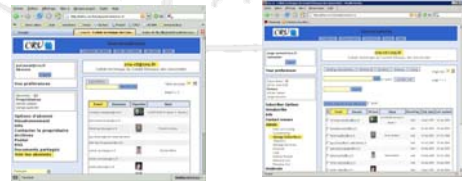
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Subscriber view

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Listmaster view

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List owner features

- Create lists online
- Manage list members
- Manage bounces
- Configure lists
- Moderate:
  - subscriptions
  - messages
  - shared documents
- View logs

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Listmaster features

- Define who can create lists,
- Moderate list creation,
- Remove lists (inactive lists)
- Search users
- Customize templates
- etc

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Sympa a mailing list server for universities

- Sympa is a pretty ML server, but why is it a mailing list server for universities?
  - authentication and SSO
  - dynamic lists
  - authorization scenarios
  - multilingual templates
  - list families
  - application integration using SOAP

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Sympa and authentication

- Sympa can be used with various authentication methods :
  - LDAP
  - CAS
  - Generic SSO...
  - PAPI
    - Need a patch (to be included in version 5.3 or 5.4)
    - Using proxy PAPI technique
      http://papi.rediris.es/doc/papiApps.pdf
  - Shibboleth

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Sympa and authorization

- Access control is not limited by hard-coded configuration
- Authorization scenario:
  - the Sympa internal language can be used to customize authorization
  - applied to all services

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Authorization: example 1

- Private list: only subscribers can send messages to the list

```
is_subscriber([sender],[listname]) smtp,md5 -> do_it
true() smtp,md5 -> reject
```

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Authorization: example 2

- Private list +message from non subscriber require editor validation

```
is_subscriber([sender],[listname]) smtp,md5 -> do_it
true() smtp,md5 -> editorkey
```

Authorization: example 3

- Idem but non subscriber message need authentication

```
is_subscriber([sender],[listname]) smtp,md5,smime -> do_it
!match([header->DKIM-verification],/true/) smtp,md5 -> request_auth
true()    md5,smime -> editorkey
```

- DKIM signature is verified using milter-dkim in this example
- S/MIME signature is verified by Sympa
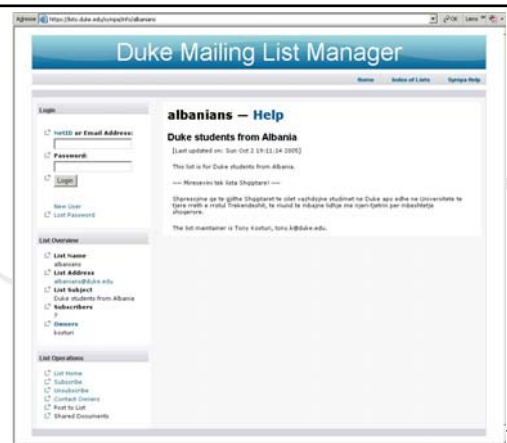- request_auth starts an email challenge with message sender
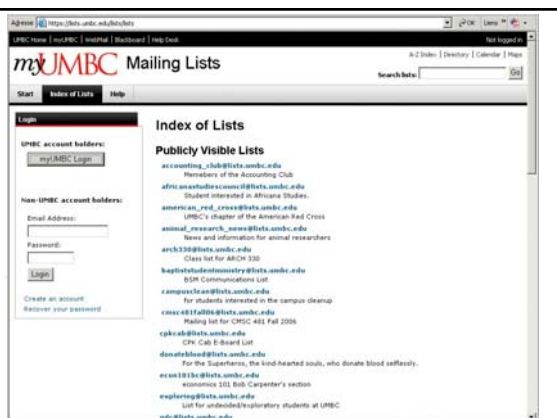
Templates

- All web pages and messages are templates
- Default templates can be replaced for site, virtual host or lists
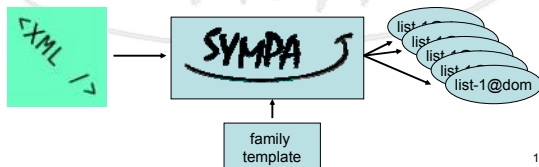
Dynamic lists (include)

- List members can be added by subscription or by including emails from external data sources:
  - LDAP (1 or 2 passes)
  - SQL
  - other lists
  - local or remote flat file (via a URL)
- Usage: "second-year students studying Mathematics"

Dynamic group of lists (families)

- A list family is a set of lists defined by:
  - a common template for all lists
  - A set of vars extracted from the University information system (formatted as an XML file)

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Dynamic group of lists (families)

- Usage: " all [role] in year [n] studying [discipline]" where:
  - role $\in$ {student, teacher}
  - discipline $\in$ {philosophy, chemistry, mathematics}
  - n $\in$ {1,2,3,4,5,6,7}
- Dynamic groups of lists use dynamic lists (include subscriber and owner)
- All lists are similar

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SOAP

- Sympa needs to integrate with other applications
- Needs a service level API: SOAP
- SOAP server provides basic services: list creation, which, add, del, review, …
- Used for: gforge, dokuwiki, Apache::authSympa, uportal channel, drupal, …

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Sympa usage

- Most French high-ed and schools (K12)
- Many French public administration (xxx.gouv.fr)
- USA academic organization :Internet2
- Many universities around the world
- Companies
- ISP
- None governmental organizations

Some free software service companies provides support

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¿ Preguntas ?

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