

# Creating & Maintaining a Mailing List

Compliments of Arizona JetMail

A well-created and properly maintained mailing list is an extremely valuable asset for any business or professional. It can be one of the keys to success in marketing products or services, sending out information or news and even an asset to share or sell to other businesses.

Typically a mailing list consists of **records** and (data) **fields**. A record contains all the data you wish to maintain for a particular company or individual. A field is the type of information you wish to list. For example, in the chart below, the horizontal rows would each be a record, the vertical columns represent fields. A **record layout** is a printout showing how the mailing list has been constructed. It shows the sequence of the fields, the number of characters or spaces dedicated to each field, and the number of fields that comprise each record.

**It is critical that your mailing list remain consistent throughout.** (Like-data in the same fields in each record.) This is why many people creating mailing lists will use either a database type program (such as Access or d-Base) or a spreadsheet program (Excel or Lotus)—because it is easy to keep track of fields visually. A word processing program (Word or Word Perfect) can also be used, but additional care must be taken to insure consistency. When a record has no data for a particular field, that field must still be present (without data in it) to maintain its place in the record field. Some of the preferred formats to use when exporting your file to disk are CSV (comma delimited), tab delimited, ASCII fixed field length, or d-base.

A typical mailing list might look like this in a spreadsheet type program:

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FNAME</u>	<u>MI</u>	<u>LNAME</u>	<u>DEPT</u>	<u>ADDRESS1</u>	<u>ADDRESS2</u>	<u>ADDRESS3</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>ST</u>	<u>ZIP</u>
MR.	STANLEY	L.	JONES		1218 E 33 <sup>RD</sup>		P.O. BOX 223	TUCSON	AZ	85716
DR.	JOSEPH		SMITH	SURGERY			P.O. BOX 555	BENSON	AZ	87639
	SALLY		WHITE		2222 E. ELM	STE. A		TUCSON	AZ	85719

Or perhaps like this in a word processing program:

TITLE	Mr.	DR.	[blank]
FNAME	Stanley	Joseph	Sally
MI	L.	[blank]	[blank]
LNAME	Jones	Smith	White
DEPT	[blank]	Surgery	[blank]
ADDRESS1	1218 E. 33 <sup>rd</sup>	[blank]	2222 N. Elm
ADDRESS2	{blank}	[blank]	Ste. A
ADDRESS3	P.O. Box 223	P.O. Box 555	[blank]
CITY	Tucson	Benson	Tucson
ST.	AZ	AZ	AZ
ZIP	85716	87639	85719

Fields are kept separated in mailing lists by using a **delimiter**. Commonly used delimiters are commas (comma delimited), tabs (tabs delimited), and quotation marks. It is up to the preference of the author as to which delimiter is used, however extra caution must be exercised when using a comma as a delimiter as the comma frequently shows up in an address (such as John Smith, Jr. or Main St., Suite A), which will automatically throw off your fields. For this reason it is best not to use punctuation in your database.

When submitting your (database) mailing list for process mailing, please indicate what platform was used (Mac or PC), in what program the list was created (i.e. Word, Excel, etc.), how the fields are delimited (i.e. comma, tab, etc.), and how many records you believe are contained in the file. It can be very helpful if you provide a hardcopy of the record layout with, perhaps, the first three or four records printed out.

A printout of a comma delimited file of the sample data above would look like this:

"TITLE","FNAME","MI","LNAME","DEPT","ADDRESS1","SUITE","ADDRESS2","CITY","ST","ZIP"

If you have foreign records in your database, these should be submitted as a *separate* file.