

list slowdown

The Urth list — 17 messages, 10 voices, 16 Aug 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5719>

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Mark Millman — 16 Aug 2010, 20:59

Folks,

I had forty-two distinct threads from the Urth List comprising one hundred ninety-three notes when I looked at my e-mail account today. I last looked on Friday around 5:00 pm, so taking the intervening time as three days, that's an average of fourteen threads and sixty-four notes per day.

Ranjit has asked, more than once, that people limit themselves to five messages per day, but apparently very few people have heeded him.

I'd be distressed to have to give up my subscription to the list, but I foresee that eventuality if this volume continues.

Mark Millman

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 16 Aug 2010, 21:25 · in reply to Mark Millman

On Mon, Aug 16, 2010 at 1:59 PM, Mark Millman <markjmillman at gmail.com> wrote:
Ranjit has asked, more than once, that people limit themselves to five messages per day, but apparently very few people have heeded him.

I'm trying. And this topic seems important enough to use my fourth (I believe) for the day.

I agree with Mark. The list is getting a little out of hand, and a lot of the current discussion seems to be an elevated version of "No it isn't!" "Yes it is!"

(The mailers that start new threads automatically don't help either, but I'm not sure what can be done about that.)

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

James Crossley — 16 Aug 2010, 21:26 · in reply to Mark Millman

Echoing and amplifying: Not that any one message or thread is to blame, but this lurker completely agrees with what Mark's said. I'll be unsubscribing, at least for a while.

James Crossley

On 8/16/10 1:59 PM, "Mark Millman" <markjmillman at gmail.com> wrote:
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Mark Millman

Jeff Wilson — 16 Aug 2010, 22:32 · in reply to Mark Millman

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Ranjit has asked, more than once, that people limit themselves to five messages per day, but apparently very few people have heeded him.

Can you seriously say why it is more important for us to post less instead of you to be more selective? I don't follow every thread here any more than I read every line of the newspaper, or even every article in a magazine devoted to a certain subject of my interest.

If it's not the overall volume, would fewer, longer posts suit you? Would fewer, thicker threads be better?

Equiring minds and Sturgeon's Lawyers want to know.

António Marques — 16 Aug 2010, 22:36 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

On Mon, Aug 16, 2010 at 1:59 PM, Mark Millman<markjmillman at gmail.com> wrote:

Ranjit has asked, more than once, that people limit themselves to five messages per day, but apparently very few people have heeded him.

I'm trying. And this topic seems important enough to use my fourth (I believe) for the day.

I agree with Mark. The list is getting a little out of hand, and a lot of the current discussion seems to be an elevated version of "No it isn't!" "Yes it is!"

I also think Mark is right. Not because I believe in some sort of control, but because this isn't a chatroom. I guess the idea here is that messages should present novel content, and that in a clear and concise way. Just so the archives don't end up with 100000 iterations of arguments that actually say next to nothing. That's tiresome and time-consuming to wade through. If we keep to saying things once and not forcing others to repeat theirs, it might be a lot more productive. Including not debating endlessly what the text says without looking at the text. If nothing else, amazon.com is our friend with its 'search inside' feature.

(The mailers that start new threads automatically don't help either, but I'm not sure what can be done about that.)

Why can't people just 'reply' to 'urth at lists.urth.net' and be done with it? So far I've gotten the idea that the new thread thing is due to something they do for their own convenience. I may be wrong.

James Wynn — 16 Aug 2010, 23:15 · in reply to Mark Millman

Mark,

Label me chastened.

I hereby promise to play by the rules from now on. Although I'm doing it "by rote" without any real comprehension of the problems of those who want it to slow down. Do people read all their mail on line? I thought IMAP systems like gmail had made that unnecessary. Do they feel a genuine need to follow every thread from start to finish? Can't you just create a rule to put anything with "urth" in the in a separate folder?

Perhaps people want to feel like they can walk away from their email for three days without being left behind in the discussion. I suppose I get that.

I don't change titles at all anymore although it's beyond me why it matters. If anything, I like a proliferation of titles because I can quickly decide if I want to read it.

Oh well, this is the last you'll hear from me today and I'll limit myself to below quota tomorrow.

u+16b9

Dave Lebling — 16 Aug 2010, 23:36 · in reply to James Wynn

I do many things to help control the list and yet I find the volume nearly overwhelming.

I hate to do the "when I was a lad" thing, but in the old days on the list (before Long Sun, before Short Sun, etc.) most of the posts were in the nature of short essays rather than the quick few-lines-added-and-many-quoted that we are seeing lately. People would read them and comment thoughtfully with original content. No doubt my memories are showing the sunsets more beautiful and the leaves more green, but interesting new ideas (like the connection between Greek myth and Silk's life) are lost in the shuffle at the current volume of messages per day.

And get off my lawn!

-- Dave Lebling, aka vizcacha

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Fred Kiesche — 17 Aug 2010, 00:49 · in reply to Dave Lebling

Not only do some of us read the list online (me), but some of us read it on dialup (also me!).

As for reading every posting of every thread--it seems when I skip, then that is when I miss something illuminating and insightful and I kick myself for not having experienced it as well.

I would vote for longer messages/thicker threads rather than an echo chamber of me toos or just adding something for the sake of adding something. I find myself approaching a need to delete all and start afresh or just unsubscribe from the list until Real Life (TM) allows me to catch up again.

On 8/16/10, Dave Lebling <dlebling at hyraxes.com> wrote:
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F.P. Kiesche III "Ah Mr. Gibbon, another damned, fat, square book. Always, scribble, scribble, scribble, eh?" (The Duke of Gloucester, on being presented with Volume 2 of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.) Blogging at The Lensman's Children (<http://theeternalgoldenbraid.blogspot.com/>).

Lee Berman — 17 Aug 2010, 02:41 · follows Fred Kiesche

While I am sympathetic to Mark Millman's sentiment, I am, in contrast to James Wynn, not contrite or chastened. In my opinion this current flurry of activity is temporary and the result of some minor irritant which has infected the board and prodded and provoked members into multiple contentious discussions.

Soon the topics that have intense interest will decline in number and total postings will die down to the handful of posts per day that recent times have seen. Moreover I think if we take a yearly average of posts per day for all members it will compute to rather less than 5 per day even for the most prolific.

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read them and comment thoughtfully with original content. No doubt my memories are showing the sunsets more beautiful and the leaves more green, but interesting new ideas (like the connection between Greek myth and Silk's life) are lost in the shuffle at the current volume of messages per day.

This sentiment I tend to agree with.

Ryan Dunn — 17 Aug 2010, 03:15 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Aug 16, 2010, at 10:41 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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The censure of activity coupled with the censoring of debate is a bit unfortunate.

I am partially to blame for the recent resurgence of activity, and for that I apologize. But the mere fact that I should apologize to the prudish few -- those who don't like their mailbox clogged and haven't learned how to set up Rules and Filters to quarantine the Urth messages, and so forth -- is in itself a let down.

I personally really, REALLY like the discourse on this mailing list, but alas it is not MY mailing list, so if the powers that be don't want to encourage spirited, renewed debate, and still others long for a sunnier yesteryear when every post was a monumental essay on all things holy and Wolfean, then so be it.

Five posts a day it is, sirs and madams.

...ryan

Ryan Dunn — 17 Aug 2010, 03:39 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Aug 16, 2010, at 10:41 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

Moreover I think if we take a yearly average of posts per day for all members it will compute to rather less than 5 per day even for the most prolific.

I don't delete any of the Urth messages I receive, they are all in their separate mailbox stored locally on my computer. This gives me the ability to do some simple analytics. Here's what I've found.

There have been 2,363 messages posted over the past 63 days (since June 15, when I first started receiving them in message form).

Since then, here are the top 10 posters. In parenthesis are their total posts followed by their posts-per-day (TP / PPD):

01. Josh Geller (361 / 5.7)
02. David Stockhoff (337 / 5.3)
03. Jeff Wilson (250 / 3.9)
04. Ryan Dunn (200 / 3.17)
05. James Wynn (183 / 2.9)
06. Lee Berman (175 / 2.77)

- 07. Antonio Marques (153 / 2.4)
- 08. John Watkins (115 / 1.8)
- 09. Gerry Quinn (97 / 1.5)
- 10. Dan'l Danehy-Oakes (81 / 1.3)

...ryan

Fred Kiesche — 17 Aug 2010, 10:33 · in reply to Fred Kiesche

You know, you are right. My work is more important. So, adios.

On 8/16/10, brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
f your recreational Reading is Interfering with Your Important Work, Sir,
I do have a suggestion for You.

Eliminate One or the Other.

Or eliminate something.

I don't know what.

With me it was my left testicle.

.

Not only do some of us read the list online (me), but some of us read it on dialup (also me!).

As for reading every posting of every thread--it seems when I skip, then that is when I miss something illuminating and insightful and I kick myself for not having experienced it as well.

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--

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Lee Berman — 17 Aug 2010, 11:11 · follows Fred Kiesche

Ryan Dunn- here are the top 10 posters. In parenthesis are their total posts followed by their posts-per-day (TP / PPD):

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10. Dan'I Danehy-Oakes (81 / 1.3)

Awesome work Ryan. You da man!

I think the average would be notably less for some if certain off-topic arguments were not factored in. Ranjit's limit of 5/day would seem to be a presciently wise and appropriate limit to have set on average.

Mark Millman — 17 Aug 2010, 19:52 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Dear Mr. (my apologies if this should be Dr.) Wilson,

On Monday 16 August 2010, you wrote:
Can you seriously say why it is more important for us to post less instead of you to be more selective? I don't follow every thread here any more than I read every line of the newspaper, or even every article in a magazine devoted to a certain subject of my interest.

The other commenters have answered your questions better than I could do.

Also, the list owner has asked for less volume, and I think it right to accede to his wishes.

If it's not the overall volume, would fewer, longer posts suit you?

That certainly would help.

Would fewer, thicker threads be better?

In my opinion, yes.

Equiring minds and Sturgeon's Lawyers want to know.

I don't believe that Mr. Danehy-Oakes addressed any questions to me.

Mark Millman

Jeff Wilson — 18 Aug 2010, 05:40 · in reply to Mark Millman

On 8/17/2010 2:52 PM, Mark Millman wrote:

Dear Mr. (my apologies if this should be Dr.) Wilson,

Jeff is fine.

On Monday 16 August 2010, you wrote:

Can you seriously say why it is more important for us to post less instead of you to be more selective? I don't follow every thread here any more than I read every line of the newspaper, or even every article in a magazine devoted to a certain subject of my interest.

The other commenters have answered your questions better than I could do.

I asked about your opinion in particular. If you are so loathe to engage in the discussion even when directly interrogated, why should the discussion be tailored to the preferences of a non-participant?

If it's not the overall volume, would fewer, longer posts suit you?

That certainly would help.

Would fewer, thicker threads be better?

In my opinion, yes.

IS it that there are fewer choices to make, to read or delete unread fewer posts, to ignore or follow fewer threads?

Equiring minds and Sturgeon's Lawyers want to know.

I don't believe that Mr. Danehy-Oakes addressed any questions to me.

He is but one of the thousands of Acipenserii of whose existence you are unaware.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Mark Millman — 18 Aug 2010, 23:22 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Dear Jeff,

On Wednesday 18 August 2010, you wrote:

Can you seriously say why it is more important for us to post less instead

of you to be more
selective? . . .

The other commenters have
answered your questions
better than I could do.

I asked about your opinion in particular.

And I indicated that others had expressed my reasoning, making it superfluous for me to do so;
and that my opinion is that their statements are better than my own is likely to be.

If you are so loathe to engage in the dis-
cussion even when directly interrogated,

I'm interested in results, rather than discussion, on this point. It seems that many topics are
discussed at length without progress--for example, many hypotheses delivered here do not
seem to get refined even by extensive discussion--and I do not intend that this issue should
provide another example. Besides which, it's off-topic to this list. This will be my last note on the
subject; but I'm answering for reasons of courtesy, because you have--as you indicate--asked
me directly.

why should the discussion be tailored to
the preferences of a non-participant?

Well, one non-participant who has asked for a change is the list owner, and several people have
seen fit to continue as they please rather than as he's asked. I'd therefore say that the
discussion hasn't been so tailored, despite the preference of a very relevant non-participant.
This being the case, why should you listen to me? But I certainly won't get the result I'd like to
see if I don't ask.

If it's not the
overall vol-
ume, would
fewer, long-
er posts
suit you?

That certainly would
help.

Would few-
er, thicker
threads be
better?

In my opinion, yes.

Given, that is, that I correctly understand your use of "thicker" here. I interpret it as implying a
higher ratio of information to verbiage.

IS it that there are fewer choices to make,
to read or delete unread fewer posts, to ig-
nore or follow fewer threads?

All of the above, plus the likelihood that more thought devoted to fewer posts will result in
better--i.e., better-written, better-reasoned, and better-supported--arguments.

Equiring minds
and Sturgeon's
Lawyers want
to know.

I don't believe that Mr.
Danehy-Oakes addressed
any questions to me.

He is but one of the thousands of Acipen-
serii of whose existence you are unaware.

It's a pity I have no chrisos for you--not even a counterfeit.

--

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Best,

Mark Millman

António Marques — 19 Aug 2010, 01:31 · in reply to Mark Millman

On 19 August 2010 00:22, Mark Millman <markjmillman at gmail.com> wrote:
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seems that many topics are discussed at length without progress--for
example, many hypotheses delivered here do not seem to get refined
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should provide another example.

I think this nails it in the head. Imo some of the participants here have little regard for the
subject matter of the list.

I'd especially like it if people here learned to distinguish two quite different situations:

- Theory A BEGS question X, and someone points out that the answer to X is likely to invalidate
A. Fine. Useful. May shoot down A or make it better if an alternate explanation is found.

- Theory B PROVIDES answer Z to question Y, and someone says that the answer could be W
instead. Wrong. Useless. Doesn't shoot down B because it doesn't invalidate Z and B doesn't
depend on Y anyway. Serves no purpose at all than idle chatter because of course there could
always be a ton of answers to Y, that's not what's under discussion.

With such a complex prime matter, discussions can go on forever and never advance an inch. I
personally LOATHE discussion for the sake of discussion, specially because it almost always
means people don't take the trouble of understanding what it's all about, only caring to have a
seemingly clever word to say. But hey, that's me.