

CUNY Academic Commons - Feature #12505

Email subject lines

2020-03-04 06:34 PM - Matt Gold

Status:	Resolved	Start date:	2020-03-04
Priority name:	Normal	Due date:	
Assignee:	Luke Waltzer	% Done:	0%
Category name:	Email Notifications	Estimated time:	0.00 hour
Target version:	1.16.8		
Description			
Hi All --			
I want to return to the subject of previous discussions on the subject line of group email notifications. I think we last discussed them here: https://redmine.gc.cuny.edu/issues/6677			
I'm part of two academic programs that are using the Commons to communicate with students in place of a listserv. Our program coordinator needs to routinely send out messages to students, which has highlighted what I think is a problem in our current configuration.			
When one is on a mobile device, especially, it's almost impossible to tell what the email is about from the limited view of the subject line given the way it is configured. I'm concerned that this results in fewer students reading these important emails.			
I've attached screenshots of views of the messages in Gmail desktop and in Mail on an iPhone. I want to point you all especially to the mobile view.			
In thinking about how to address this, we need to consider how widespread of a problem it is, and even whether it is a problem. But I would argue that it is.			
And in terms of a solution, we could rethink the order of the subject line -- or, possibly, give group admins a choice in how the subject line is arrayed (ie, some may be fine with the current order, while others may want to rearrange the elements of topic, poster, and group name.			
We can definitely discuss this at an in-person meeting, but I wanted to begin discussion here. I'm assigning to Luke first for his feedback but would love anyone interested to chime in.			
Related issues:			
Related to CUNY Academic Commons - Bug #9085: Email notification for group do...		Resolved	2018-01-12
Related to CUNY Academic Commons - Feature #8670: Group Forum Notifications		Resolved	2017-09-07
Related to CUNY Academic Commons - Feature #12332: Limit length of email subj...		Resolved	2020-01-27

History

#1 - 2020-03-04 06:35 PM - Matt Gold

- File *Screen Shot 2020-03-04 at 6.27.06 PM.png* added

- File *Inbox - mattgold@gmail.com.png* added

#2 - 2020-03-04 09:36 PM - Colin McDonald

I recall discussing this at some point and an idea that got a little traction was having a configurable field like "Group Name Abbreviation:" somewhere, perhaps in Email Options for the Group, with a note explaining that filling this in would substitute the full Group name for the abbreviation in email subject lines. Maybe we character-limit that field. Totally an opt-in thing for the Group admin, so if the field is blank, it shows the full Group name in the subject as usual.

Not sure if there are technical limitations to this. Seems better to me than automatically truncating all names in subjects, which could cause confusion, and might be overstepping if this is only an issue in limited cases.

#3 - 2020-03-05 01:37 PM - Luke Waltzer

I think it makes sense to invert the subject line.... maybe something like: [CAC Groups] Subject (in Group Name).

I would be against having Group Admins determine the order... that introduces complexity at a moment where we're trying to slim down, and I think standardization has value here.

#4 - 2020-03-10 11:28 AM - Boone Gorges

- Related to Bug #9085: Email notification for group doc creation added

#5 - 2020-03-10 11:28 AM - Boone Gorges

- Related to Feature #8670: Group Forum Notifications added

#6 - 2020-03-10 11:28 AM - Boone Gorges

- Related to Feature #12332: Limit length of email subject triggered by event activity when activity is linked to multiple groups added

#7 - 2020-03-10 11:31 AM - Boone Gorges

- Target version set to 1.17.0

Adding to the 1.17 milestone for consideration. Building significant tools for group admins to change the wording takes dev and design resources, and may be out of scope. But if there's a simple reordering/rewording we can apply across the board, it might be possible for the spring.

#8 - 2020-03-10 12:58 PM - Raymond Hoh

I agree with Luke. We shouldn't allow the subject line to be customized on a per-group basis as there will be no consistency across all groups on the Commons. This could even lead to more support questions.

About the general formatting of the email subject lines, other applications like Redmine, Github, Meetup and Basecamp already use a similar format:

- Github:

-- New discussion - [username/repo-slug] Title (ticket number)

-- Reply - Re: [username/repo-slug] Title (ticket number)

-- From field - Name

- Basecamp:

-- New discussion - (Project name) Title

-- Reply - Re: (Project name) Title

-- From field - Name (Basecamp)

- Meetup:

-- New discussion - Group name list: "Title"

-- From field - Name (Meetup)

- Redmine:

-- New discussion and reply - (Project name - Ticket number) Title

- CAC:

-- New discussion - (Group name) Title

-- Reply - (Group name) Re: Title

-- From field - Name

#9 - 2020-03-10 01:24 PM - Raymond Hoh

One way to declutter the subject line is to put the group name in the email's "From" field: Author name (Group name)

That way, we could free up the subject line with just the topic title. This kind of breaks convention from what other sites are using, but what do others think?

#10 - 2020-03-14 09:48 PM - Matt Gold

I think that's a great suggestion. do you have a sense of what the subject line would look like if we implemented that, Ray?

#11 - 2020-03-15 05:21 PM - Raymond Hoh

I think that's a great suggestion. do you have a sense of what the subject line would look like if we implemented that, Ray?

This is all theoretical as I haven't looked into if it is possible to modify the "From" field to add the group name.

But if that was possible, the subject line would just be whatever the title is.

- Forum topics: Title

- Documents: Doc - Title

- Groupblog post: Blog Post - Title

#12 - 2020-03-16 11:14 AM - Matt Gold

okay. thank you. if there is no objection, can we please explore this?

#13 - 2020-03-16 03:54 PM - Raymond Hoh

Sure, anyone else have any other thoughts before I look into this?

#14 - 2020-03-20 01:19 AM - Raymond Hoh

- Status changed from Assigned to Testing Required

I've added some code to move the group name from the subject line to the "From" email header:

<https://github.com/cuny-academic-commons/cac/commit/c4e75ac5d0009f548b97d7fc00efa5de0a95db8a>

This is available for testing on the development site.

Currently, this is slated for the next major release. If we want to move this functionality to an earlier maintenance release, let me know.

#15 - 2020-03-23 10:56 PM - Raymond Hoh

- Status changed from Testing Required to Staged for Production Release

- Target version changed from 1.17.0 to 1.16.8

As discussed, moving to 1.16.8.

Code reference - <https://github.com/cuny-academic-commons/cac/compare/7ebfe75...b81f3af>

#16 - 2020-03-24 11:43 AM - Boone Gorges

- Status changed from Staged for Production Release to Resolved

Files

Screen Shot 2020-03-04 at 6.27.06 PM.png	159 KB	2020-03-04	Matt Gold
Inbox - mattgold@gmail.com.png	169 KB	2020-03-04	Matt Gold