

# CUNY Academic Commons - Bug #9289

## Email Users Plugin

2018-02-26 02:30 PM - Laurie Hurson

<b>Status:</b>	Reporter Feedback	<b>Start date:</b>	2018-02-26
<b>Priority name:</b>	Normal	<b>Due date:</b>	
<b>Assignee:</b>	Boone Gorges	<b>% Done:</b>	0%
<b>Category name:</b>	WordPress Plugins	<b>Estimated time:</b>	0.00 hour
<b>Target version:</b>	Future release		

### Description

Several faculty participating in the OER Fellows program to run their courses on the Commons did not want to setup a group and therefore wanted to send students emails through their course site. They attempted to use the email users plugin but it appears the plugin is not sending emails correctly.

The plugin has two methods of sending email, to individuals or to groups. Through the Individual send area an Admin can select multiple individuals. Through the Group send area, an Admin can choose a group to send to based on user roles on the site (i.e. Author, Editor, etc). Several issues have been reported from faculty using this plugin.

In the individual area, when several users are selected (using ctrl key) only some students receive the email. The faculty members confirm this because once the email is "sent" the plugin reports that the email has been sent to 23 of 25 users. This has happened on the following sites:

<https://bmccsoc124.commonsgc.cuny.edu/> -- 23 of 25 student Authors receive email  
<https://bmccsoc144.commonsgc.cuny.edu/> -- 16 of 25 student Authors received email.  
<https://soc100munshi.commonsgc.cuny.edu/> -- Students are subscribers, only half received emails

In the group send area, often user role types are missing from the list of groups to send emails to. This has happened on the following sites:

<https://bmccsoc091.commonsgc.cuny.edu/> -- Author Role missing from Group area  
[https://bmccasnmunshi.commonsgc.cuny.edu](https://bmccasnmunshi.commonsgc.cuny.edu/) -- Author role missing from group area  
<https://freequeercuny.commonsgc.cuny.edu/> -- Author role missing from group area

### History

#### #1 - 2018-02-26 03:04 PM - Boone Gorges

- File Screenshot\_2018-02-26\_13-51-54.png added

- File Screenshot\_2018-02-26\_13-51-34.png added

Hi Laurie - Thanks for opening the ticket. It may be helpful to split some of these items into different tickets, but first let me see if I can eliminate some of them.

In the group send area, often user role types are missing from the list of groups to send emails to.

Without more details about just what the users are seeing, I have to guess a little bit at what's happening. I've attached two screenshots that show what I see on bmccsoc091.commonsgc.cuny.edu: the list of user roles on Dashboard > Users, and the roles available on Dashboard > Email Users > Send to Group(s). The roles on Dashboard > Users are Administrator, Author, Keymaster, Participant. On the EU page I see Administrator and Author. These latter roles are WP roles, while Keymaster and Participant are bbPress roles. So, the "groups" feature of Email Users only works for WP roles. It might be possible (though not easy, based on what I see in the Email Users code) to include bbPress roles, but for the time being, I'd suggest that administrators rely on the WP roles.

only some students receive the email

Unfortunately, it's hard to see exactly what's happening here without more detail. The plugin works by sending a single email to the **author**, which is then BCCed to each recipient. The "count" displayed in the success message - "Email sent to 45 users" etc - is based on the BCC count. It's not clear to me, from looking at the code, how only some of the BCCs would fail (unless they're not well-formed email addresses). It could be the fact that the GC is limiting the number of BCC entries on outgoing email - this is fairly common, as a spam-prevention measure - but this wouldn't explain the inconsistent results that your users are seeing.

If you could provide some specific information about a failed instance, it would be helpful. In particular, for a specific instance:

- The site where the email was created
- The date and time the email was created

- The email address of at least one user to whom the email appears to have been sent
- The email address of at least one user to whom the email appears **not** to have been sent

Before/after screenshots may be enough, as I'd be able to glean the email addresses from the Recipients area of the screenshot.

#### #2 - 2018-02-27 02:41 PM - Luke Waltzer

Thanks for this, Boone. I'm reluctant to ask Laurie to go back to the faculty fellow to help with troubleshooting, as she's already spread pretty thin.

@Laurie, how about setting up a test site using accounts from TLC staff to see if we can recreate some of the problems Soniya was experiencing?

#### #3 - 2018-02-27 03:34 PM - Laurie Hurson

Will do.

I have set up and test site and will try to recreate this issue and report back.

#### #4 - 2018-03-01 07:47 PM - Laurie Hurson

- File 4 GRP email results.png added

- File 2 GRP email.png added

- File 1 -IND email .png added

- File 3 IND email results.png added

Hi all,

An update on this plugin:

I trail ran it on <https://coursetest.commonscuny.edu/>

Today 3/1 attempted to send to multiple Individuals (11:30am) and the "authors" group (11:32am). Screenshots 1 and 2.

It looks like the email only went to 1 user (Luke) in both sending methods. Screenshots 3 and 4.

The only person who received the email was Luke. Of note, he was the only user (author) added to the site before email users plugin was installed.

#### #5 - 2018-03-02 11:24 AM - Boone Gorges

I spent a few minutes looking at how Email Users works. It appears that it only allows emails to be sent to users who have opted into "mass emails". See <https://coursetest.commonscuny.edu/wp-admin/admin.php?page=mailusers-user-settings>. Of the people you emailed to, only Luke has the setting turned on. This is true for both "individual" and "group" emails.

Looking into this, it is becoming clear that this plugin is not appropriate for use on Multisite:

- The "mass email" user setting is **networkwide**. If it's changed on

<https://coursetest.commonscuny.edu/wp-admin/admin.php?page=mailusers-user-settings>, it'll be changed for every other site on which the user is a member. There's no finer-grained controls.

- The plugin attempts to set a default "mass email" setting for new users, but the way it's done doesn't mesh cleanly with Multisite at all. It uses the 'profile\_update' and 'user\_register' hooks, which fire in much different sequence in a multisite environment than in non-MS WordPress.

Based on the above, I'd suggest we look for a better solution for mass-emailing from the WordPress side than Email Users. Indeed, given the above, I'd almost suggest disabling it for anyone who doesn't already have it activated, as it's likely to cause more headache than not. Matt, Luke, Laurie, do you have thoughts about how to proceed?

#### #6 - 2018-03-02 12:35 PM - Matt Gold

Hi Boone,

I'm fine with disabling it for anyone who doesn't already have it enabled, and I do think we should look into (or perhaps create) an alternative. This is very much related to OER work so we can draw from those funds if we need to write something new.

#### #7 - 2018-03-02 03:07 PM - Boone Gorges

Thanks, Matt. I'm going to put a fix in place immediately that disables Email Users on sites where it's not already active.

<https://github.com/cuny-academic-commons/cac/commit/0084fea54a7b0b4848e772160ec3e83af58bda3c>

It may turn out in the medium- to long-term that we need to build something custom, especially if we want to avoid the overhead of maintaining two separate email systems in perpetuity. More specifically, it would be ideal if a tool was available for use on the WP Dashboard that shared its internals with the email tools we use on the BP side of the site.

However, in the meantime, I think it's worth looking at a few existing solutions that'd be better than nothing while we work toward an ideal solution for the Commons. Based on some very brief research, here are some possibilities:

- We already have the Newsletters plugin on the Commons, and it seems to work fairly well for sending mass emails. The concept of a Newsletter is a bit different from emailing site users (the concept of "subscription" doesn't quite fit) but it could likely be used without too much trouble.

- <https://premium.wpmudev.org/project/mass-email-sender/>
- <https://wordpress.org/support/plugin/wp-email-users> At a **very** quick glance at the code, it appears that this one should work properly on multisite. No idea whether it has the feature set we are looking for.
- <https://wordpress.org/plugins/send-email-from-admin/> looks much more barebones but at least compatible with multisite

**#8 - 2018-03-02 03:13 PM - Matt Gold**

Thanks, Boone. Luke and Laurie, can you please look into these alternatives?

**#9 - 2018-03-02 03:18 PM - Luke Waltzer**

Mass Email Sender looks like it's built for whole network emails (may have site specific functions, too, but we don't want the former). WP-Email-Users looks great. Happy to take it for a spin Boone if you want to deploy either to dev or on <https://coursetest.commonsc.gc.cuny.edu/>.

Thanks-

**#10 - 2018-03-02 03:44 PM - Boone Gorges**

- Status changed from New to Testing Required

Sure thing, Luke. I've added it to the dev environment. Please play carefully there - it will send emails to anyone. Let me know what you think after you've had a chance to play around. <https://github.com/cuny-academic-commons/cac/commit/70312df0cacb311786463a778bc24f15b0fbf727>

**#11 - 2018-03-02 04:03 PM - Luke Waltzer**

It works, but it's not ideal, and seems not to be multisite aware... all emails come from [commons@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:commons@gc.cuny.edu), and there's no site-specific indicator in the emails (though you could create one via a template). I worry about a bunch of responses coming into that account should that be the from address...

**#12 - 2018-03-13 11:58 AM - Boone Gorges**

- Status changed from Testing Required to Reporter Feedback

- Target version set to 1.12.11

Luke, is the From address the only issue? This might be something we can fairly easily override.

I haven't spent any time with the "template" feature to see how it works. Do you see this (and the related manual intervention) as a dealbreaker for the plugin? Do you have thoughts about how the process might be automated?

**#13 - 2018-03-27 11:21 AM - Raymond Hoh**

- Target version changed from 1.12.11 to 1.12.12

**#14 - 2018-03-29 05:06 PM - Matt Gold**

- Assignee set to Boone Gorges

**#15 - 2018-04-10 10:41 AM - Boone Gorges**

- Target version changed from 1.12.12 to 1.12.13

**#16 - 2018-04-24 10:09 AM - Boone Gorges**

- Target version changed from 1.12.13 to 1.14

Moving into the next major release for investigation. When the Teaching Fellows team has a chance to do a bit of additional research, we can move forward with next steps.

**#17 - 2018-10-24 12:34 PM - Boone Gorges**

- Target version changed from 1.14 to Future release

**Files**

Screenshot_2018-02-26_13-51-34.png	6.28 KB	2018-02-26	Boone Gorges
Screenshot_2018-02-26_13-51-54.png	136 KB	2018-02-26	Boone Gorges
2 GRP email.png	153 KB	2018-03-02	Laurie Hurson
1 -IND email .png	162 KB	2018-03-02	Laurie Hurson
4 GRP email results.png	155 KB	2018-03-02	Laurie Hurson
3 IND email results.png	170 KB	2018-03-02	Laurie Hurson