Guidelines for Editorial "Generic Accounts" (Mail-In Databases)

Overview:

"Generic accounts" are used by Editorial for addresses such as Sports@latimes.com, which are published in The Times, inviting e-mail from the public.

These accounts are also known as "mail-in databases." They do not appear in the Notes address book, although Times users could send mail to the @latimes.com address. The mail would go out the internet mail gateway and come back in.

Access to the messages collected in these databases is controlled through Lotus Notes global e-mail group memberships. There are two types of groups, "owners" and "editors." Owners can add or remove members of the owner groups as well as add or remove members of the reader groups.

Both groups have the same privileges regarding the mail – members can read, forward and delete messages. They can reply to messages, but the replies will be stamped as sent from them personally – John.Smith@Latimes.com. But only members of the owners group can change membership of the groups.

The following name conventions will be used:

#Editorial_XX_YYYY_Owners always includes the zzEditSystems and zzHelpdesk groups, who will be primarily in charge of adjusting group memberships. Editorial Systems sometimes designates "system specialists" from the Editorial staff and gives them responsibility for some membership adjustments to specific database groups. The rights are granted by adding the specialists' names to this owners group.

#Editorial_XX_YYYY_Editors includes the names of individuals who have "ordinary" access to the mail in the database.

#Editorial_XX_YYYY_Readers is an optional additional group that can exist when editorial needs to separate access into groups that can only read the incoming mail, from those that can read, forward and delete mail.

For "XX," the common region/plant/edition abbreviations are used, such as LA, OC, DC, SF, VE, etc. For "YYYY," the e-mail address name, omitting "@latimes.com," is used.

(FYI, whenever a Notes user is deleted, all group memberships for that user are deleted as well, so departures are maintained automatically.)

Since the days before editorial networking and e-mail, messages to generic addresses have been converted to text files and routed to News Editing System (NES) baskets. Optionally, they also went to inboxes, usually in Pine e-mail. These mail-in database accounts can replace the Pine accounts.

NES text files can still be generated, but it seems preferable to discourage and eliminate this when possible. Only a tiny percentage of such public e-mail is ever published, and those that are selected now can easily be define-cut-pasted into an NES or CCI story, rather than having all e-mails converted to text files.

Users who have first been granted "membership" can have the "mail-in database" efficiently installed on their Notes workspace. An owner can e-mail a link to the generic account to the new users. Clicking on the link will not only open the database, but will install an icon for the database on the recipient's Notes workspace for future use.
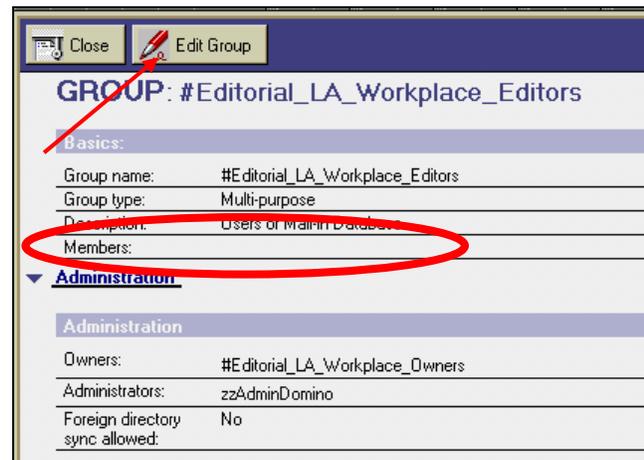
Changing Group Memberships

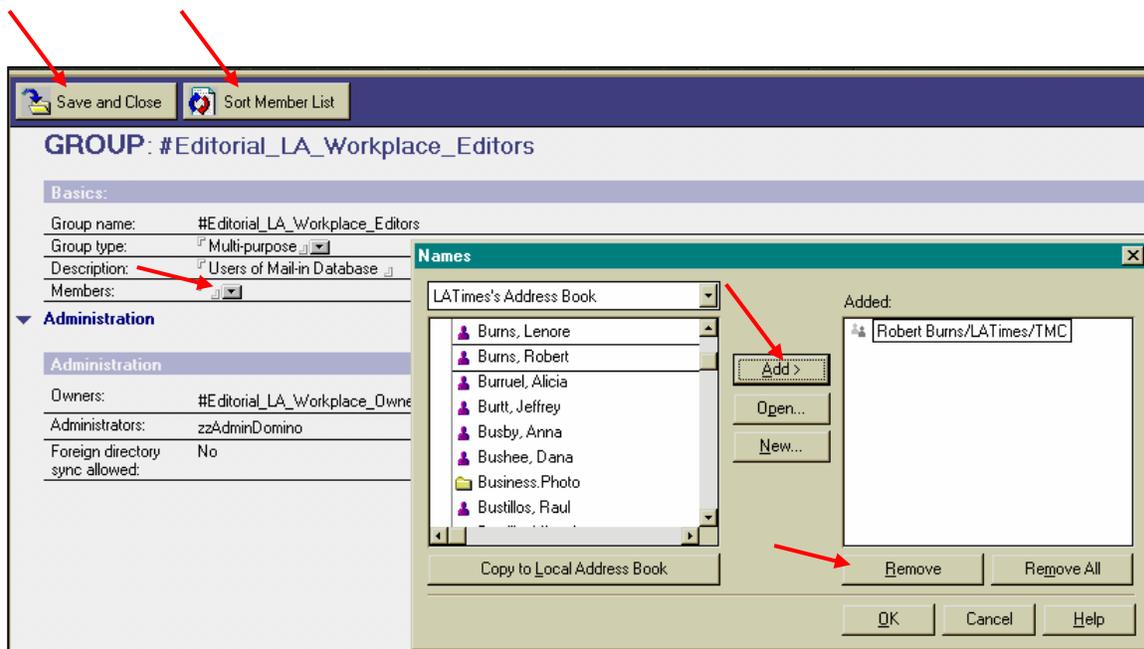Open the LATimes's Address Book, select "Groups," and locate the group you wish to change.

Double-click on the group name to open its record.
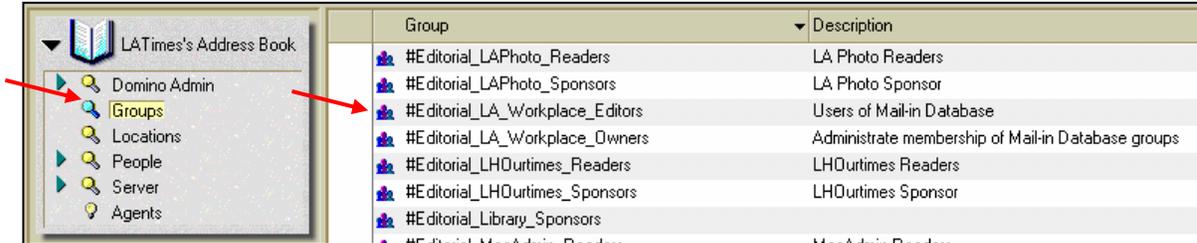
Note the "Owners." These are the persons or groups that can make changes to group memberships.

Click on the "Edit Group" button, which puts brackets around the "Members" field.

Clicking on the drill-down arrow at the end of the "Members" field brings up a "Names" window into the address book. Select names on the left and click "Add," or select names on the right and click "Remove," to adjust the membership.

The "Sort Member List" button at the top is useful, when finished making changes, to rearrange the member list in alphabetical order.

Click on "OK" on the Names window, then on "Save and Close." Changes take effect immediately.

How to Create or Remove an Entire Database

While Owners can maintain groups, the databases are created originally by IT Data Security. Data Security also handles removal of a database.

For a new database, first validate the public e-mail address:

      A text file that lists all L.A. Times e-mail addresses is refreshed daily from the sendmail server. The full path to the file is \\Grackle\MailAlias\alias.txt. If you frequently issue requests for a new address you may want to make a shortcut to this file and keep it in an accessible place on your PC for quick access. Use the search function in your file viewer/text editor to scan this file for a duplicate of your proposed e-mail address.

Next, issue a Tivoli call registration record:

SCIM: ADMINISTRATION / DATA SECURITY / MESSAGING / EDIT GENERIC

Problem Type: Maintenance

Problem Code: Transferred (Transfer to Data Security when done)

Description: Indicate the public (@latimes.com) e-mail address:
                  Indicate the region / edition / plant with a two-letter abbreviation.
                  Indicate if NES text-file creation is required. Try to discourage this. Indicate the basket in which the text files will be deposited. New baskets can be created for this purpose.

Data Security will create the account and the groups, but will not add any members. (zzEditSystems and zzHelpdesk will be the Owners empowered to do this.) The originator of the Tivoli call registration will be informed when the account is ready and the server where it is found. The originator of the call registration can then begin populating the Editor group and distributing the link icon, either to Editor group members, or to other Owners who will complete the process.
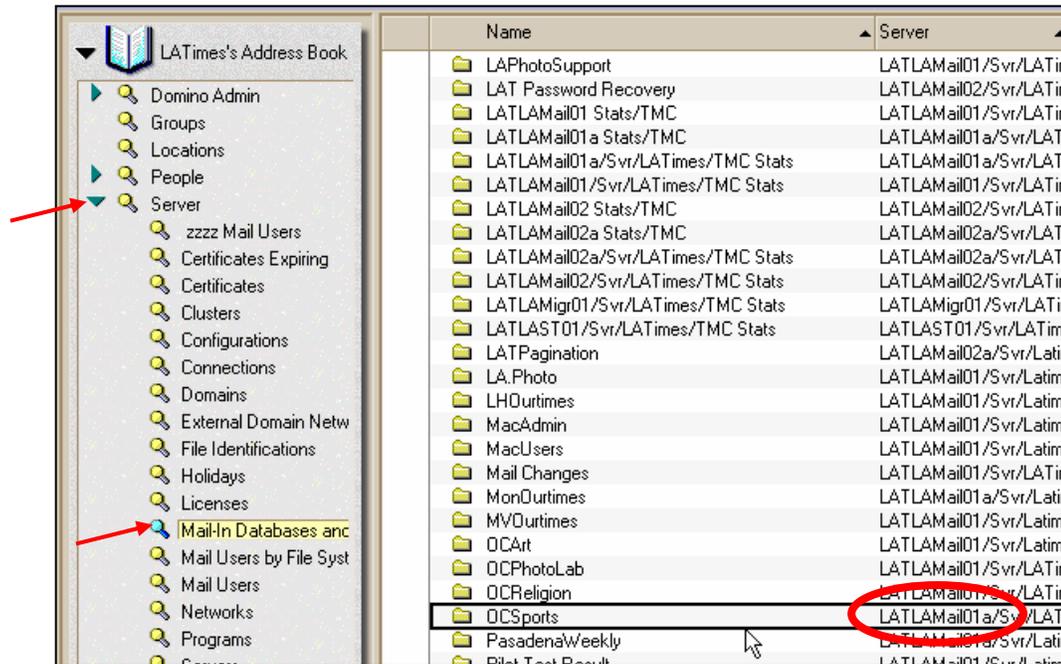
To remove an entire group, issue a Tivoli call registration record with the same SCIM and transfer it to Data Security.

How to Find the "Owner" and "Editor" Groups for a Mail-In DB

Owners maintain both the "Owner" and the "Editor" group memberships.

First, determine on which mail server the database resides:

Go to your workspace and open the LATimes's Address book.

In the left window, click on the drill-down arrow next to "Server," and select "Mail-In Databases and Resources." Scroll the right window to locate the database you want. The name of the mail server is in the first part of the "Server" column.

Next, check the "Access Control" record for the database, as follows …

Close up the Address Book and return to the Notes workspace. Pull down File / Database / Open, and click.
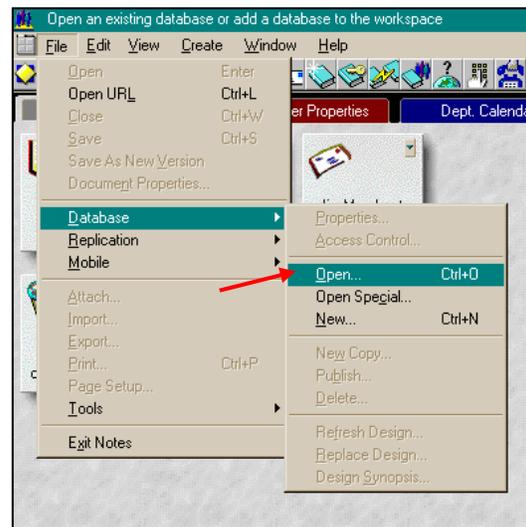
In the Open Database window, click the drill-down arrow on the "Server" field to change the server from "Local" to the appropriate server.
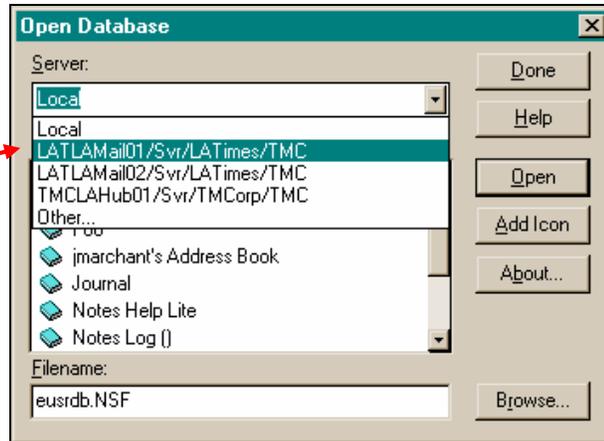
Then scroll the "Database" window to the folder "Applications" and drill down to \Applications\Editorial\.
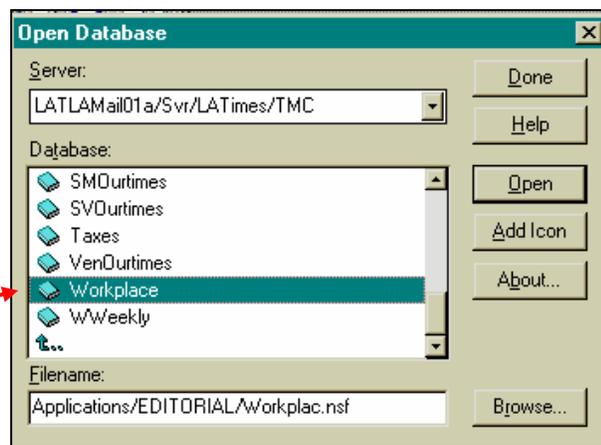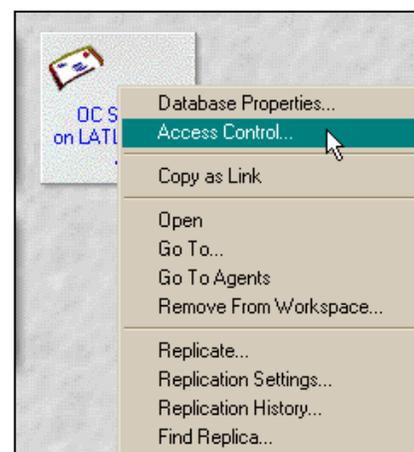
Select the database and click on the "Open" button, which will place the database on your workspace. (You can delete it later.)

Go to your workspace, and right-click on the icon for the mail-in database you just installed.
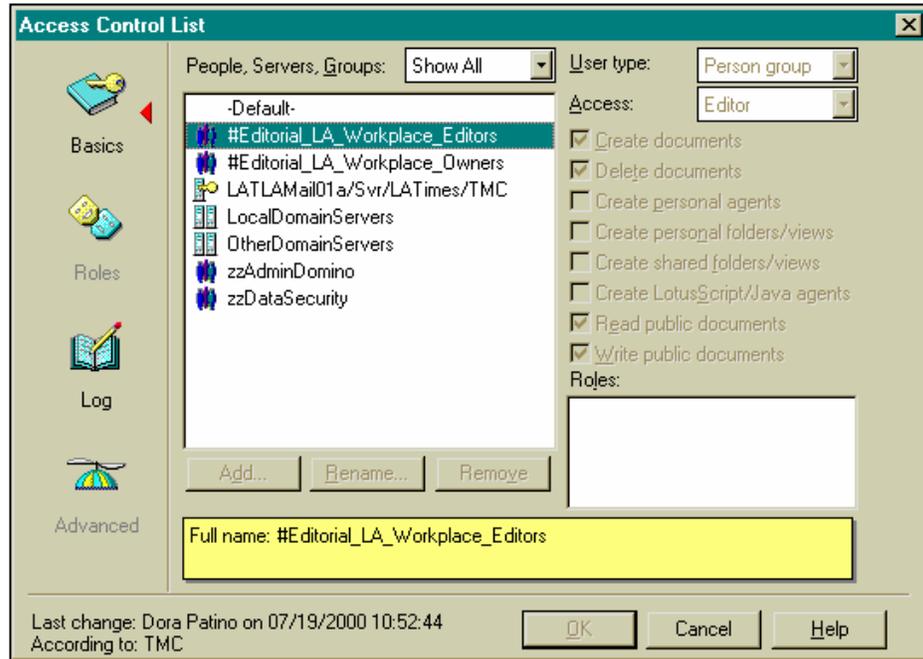
Click on "Access Control."

Settings here determine what a user can do with the database after it is opened in his/her Notes Workspace.

By selecting entries in the "People, Servers, Groups" box, you can see the privileges they have.

The Owners and Editors groups will have identical privileges, as indicated by the checked boxes on the right.
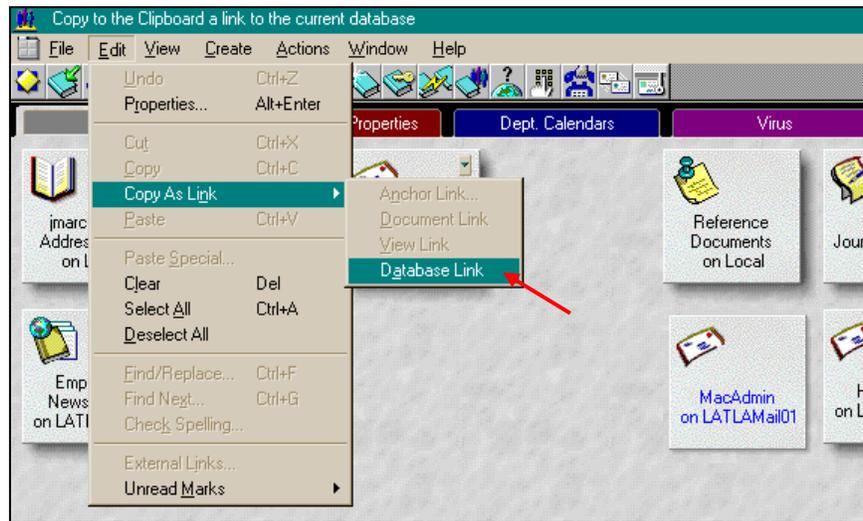
How to Help a User Install a Mail-In DB on Their Notes Workspace

First, add the user to the Editor group for this database.

Install this database on your own workspace (you can delete it later). Select it by clicking once. (You don't need to open it.)

Pull down Edit / Copy As Link / Database Link and click.

Prepare a new memo, addressed to the user. With your cursor in the memo's text area, execute Paste to place an icon in the memo.

Tell the user in the memo to double-click on the icon to open the database, which also will place an icon of the database on his/her workspace for future use. Send the memo.