

# **Setting Up Email Catalogs with MDaemon 6+**

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## **Abstract**

The catalog is an often overlooked, yet, extremely useful tool for distributing documents and files. Catalogs are quick, structured and more secure than FTP or HTTP servers. Catalogs can contain any type of file from pictures and documents, to application programs and scripts. Electronic catalogs (e-catalogs) have the added benefit of being easy to change, so the content can be current to the moment. MDaemon contains tools for creating, editing and deleting catalogs. Catalogs are easy for beginners and powerful for more advanced administrators.

# The Ups and Downs of e-Catalogs

## The Appeal of Catalogs

Catalogs can summarize a lot of information in small spaces and transport that material to people who need to know. Through pictures or descriptions or both, catalogs can help readers find merchandise, learn about class offerings or locate books, for example.

If the descriptions are complete and accurate, people can compare and contrast items and make decisions while at home, school or office.

e-Catalogs have the added benefits of being easy to change, so the content can be current to the moment.

## The World Wide Web as a Catalog

Even from its beginnings, before the invention of the World Wide Web and electronic shopping carts, the Internet was basically a catalog. Known in its 1969 genesis as ARPANet, the electronic latticework shared online card catalogs and documents among large libraries and research centers.

Although the pooled information was helpful and very effective, only the specially trained could access it because the software was detailed and technical from the user's point of view.

The Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), which drives the Internet's World Wide Web today, is said to be the greatest tool for catalogs, with its capability to deploy images, multimedia, text and files of many types. Plus, it is highly interactive. HTTP is quick, easy and economical to keep current. For users, hundreds of search engines provide fairly useful access to hundreds of millions of web pages.

Wide acceptance and use have brought usability problems to the World Wide Web, however. Information is sometimes difficult or impossible to access because content developers stray from industry standards. This means a page may display in one version of one specific browser, but fail to load in other browsers. Browser developers can also add to this confusion by extending browser capabilities too far beyond the standards, then encouraging content developers to deploy these browser-specific extensions. Also, the inclusion of large amounts of graphics, multimedia, client-side scripts and other rich content can make download times excessive and counterproductive.



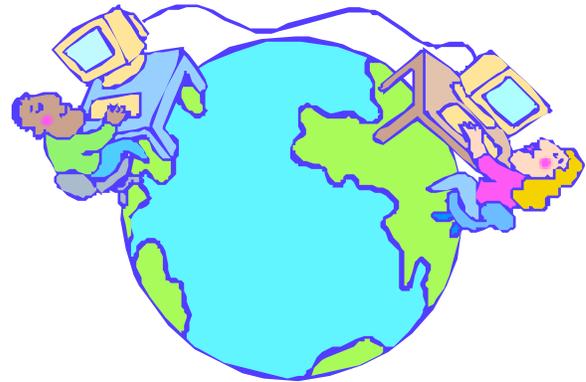
Beyond this, HTTP can create security problems for the networks running this service. These problems can be amplified for small organizations with limited and non-existing IT staffs who lack the knowledge to “lock down” the systems.

### The Simple Elegance of E-Mail Catalogs

A special class of e-catalogs addresses almost all of the problems created by distributing information through HTTP. Email catalogs are not the best solution for every file distribution situation. They do, however, provide a quick, secure means for distributing files of any type.

In practice, email Catalogs are simple to create and use. They can be an very attractive alternative for the small or mid-sized organization without the means or motivation to run an HTTP server.

Users can access the contents and files of catalogs by sending a server emails. The server responds by emailing the requested documents to each user. When combined with email auto responders, catalogs can serve as near realtime monitors of a computer system, plus it's processes and networks, for example.



### Email Catalog Applications

Email catalogs can deliver any type of file. Catalogs can send tiny documents of several bytes or huge files of several megabytes or more. Restrictions on the attachment size a requestor can receive is the practical limit. This is typically two megabytes or smaller. The files can be standard documents or compressed. Some applications catalogs can serve include:

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Whitepapers      | By storing these in a catalog without password protection, anyone who knows catalog name can request a directory of the files and then request the files themselves.  |
| Device Drivers   | Typically, IT departments store device drivers on an FTP or Website. Storing them in a catalog provides simple access without having to use a FTP client or web browser.  |
| Secure Documents | For your eyes only documents are safe in password protected catalogs. They are stored out of the public view, but can be quickly retrieved by anyone knowing the catalog name and password, plus the file shortcut name.  |
| System Logs      | Combining catalogs with auto responders permits remote monitoring of file server, network and email server logs. This is a two-email process. The first email requests the auto responder to create the log and add it to a catalog. The second email asks the mail server to send the log. |

Images

Photos could be of products, corporate officers or the recent company picnic.

Fill in the Blank

Just about any file you can imagine can be distributed quickly and securely through a catalog.

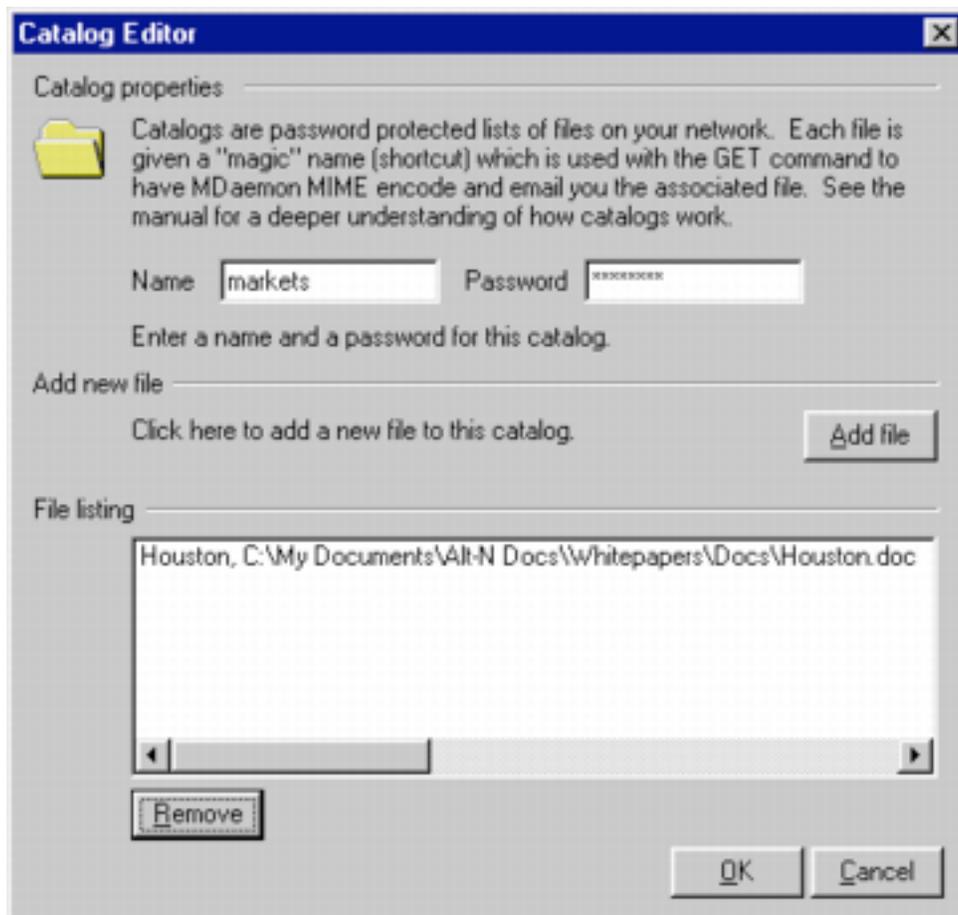
## Configuring and Using MDAemon Catalogs

### Public and Private Catalogs

MDaemon comes with a public catalog for storing documents open to anyone. Other catalogs can be password protected or open to anyone. None of the catalogs require an email account on the server for access. All that is needed is the catalog name and password (if any), plus the file's shortcut name, also known as the magic name.

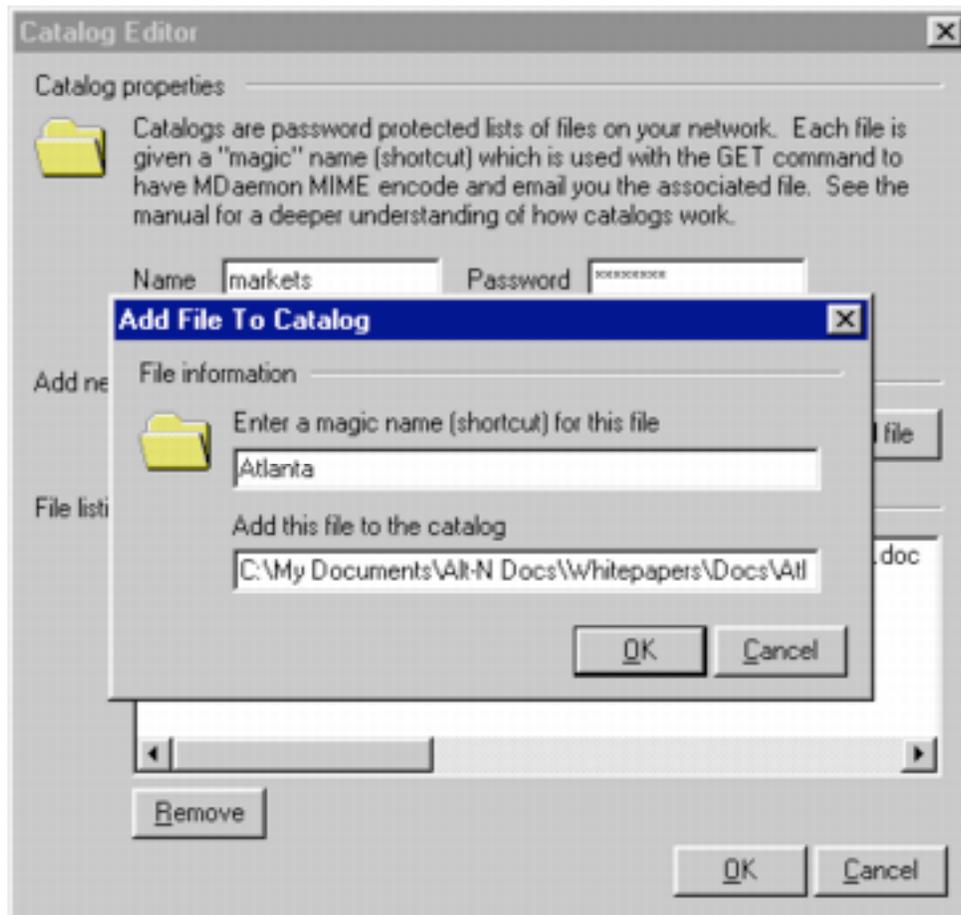
### Creating, Editing and Deleting Catalogs

The catalog menu contains commands for creating, editing and deleting catalogs. The illustration shows the dialog for creating a catalog through the **New Catalog** command.



Catalog creation is simple, requiring only a name, plus an optional password. A catalog can be created with or without files.

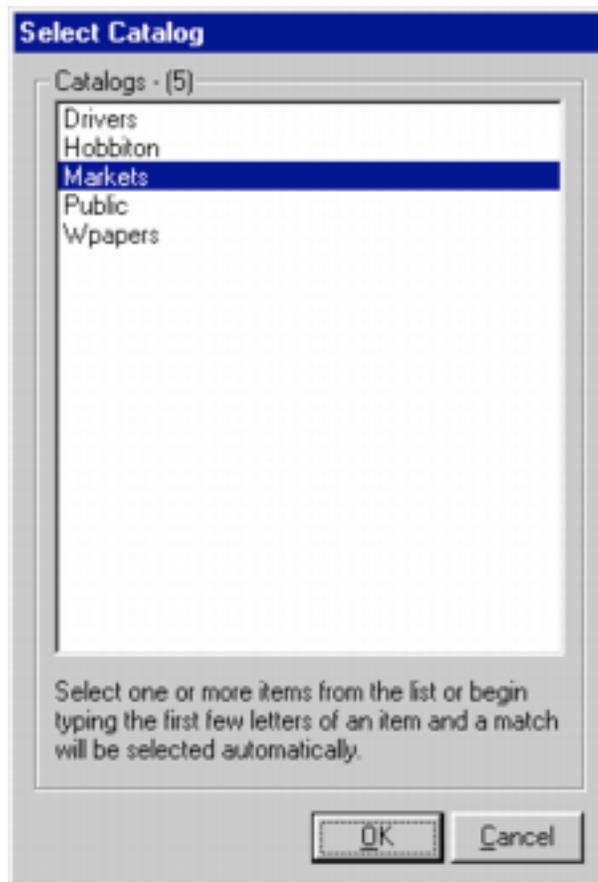
The image shows a file being added.



Adding a file involves selecting the file and assigning a shortcut name, also known as its magic name. When added, files are listed in the catalog, but not physically moved to a catalog directory. This means the files can be stored in any location and still be accessible through the catalog. This type of storage is very secure for sensitive documents.

Editing or Deleting a catalog removes the catalog itself but leaves the files untouched.

The illustration shows a list for selecting a catalog to edit or delete.

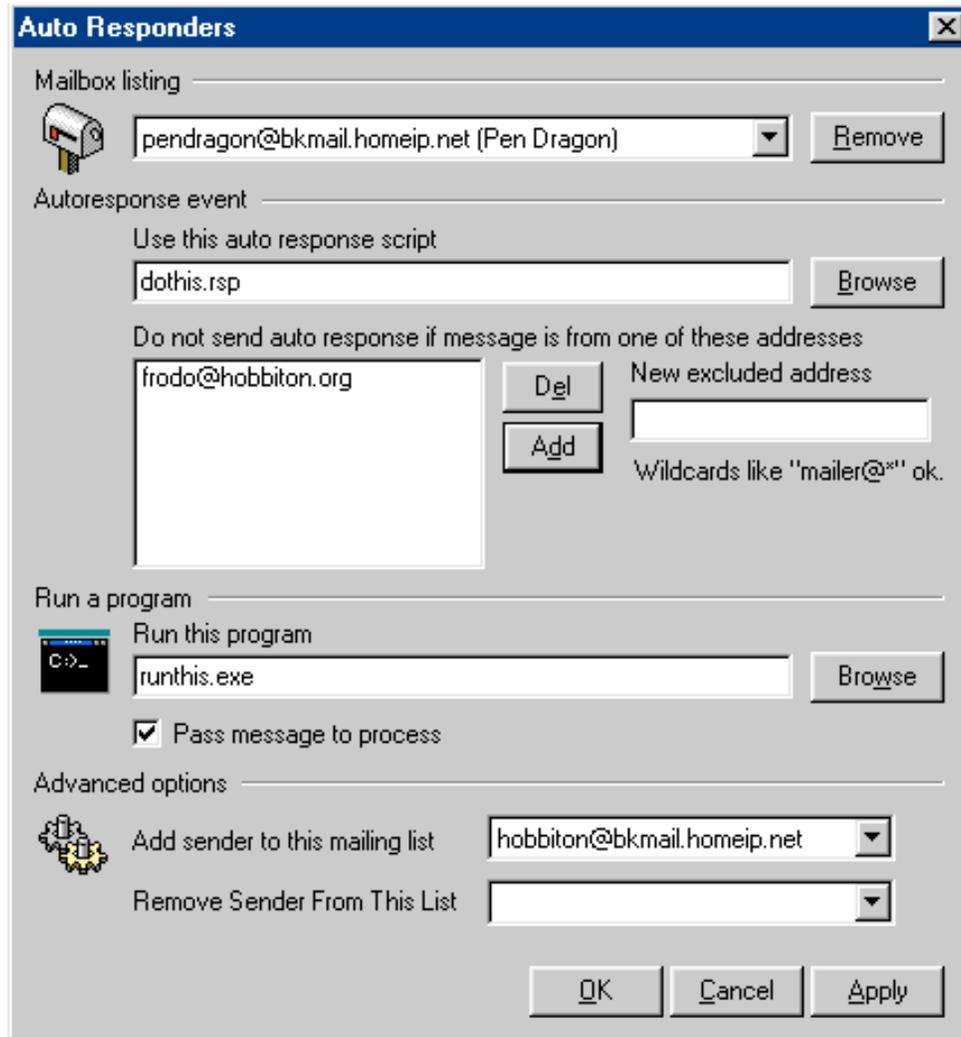


### **A Little About Auto Responders**

Auto Responders work for individual email accounts. When an account receives an email the Auto Responder sets off a response which could be anything from running a script to executing a program. By setting up account restrictions, the administrator can limit access to Auto Responder accounts.

Auto Responders can be set up to do just about anything, including adding documents and reports to a catalog.

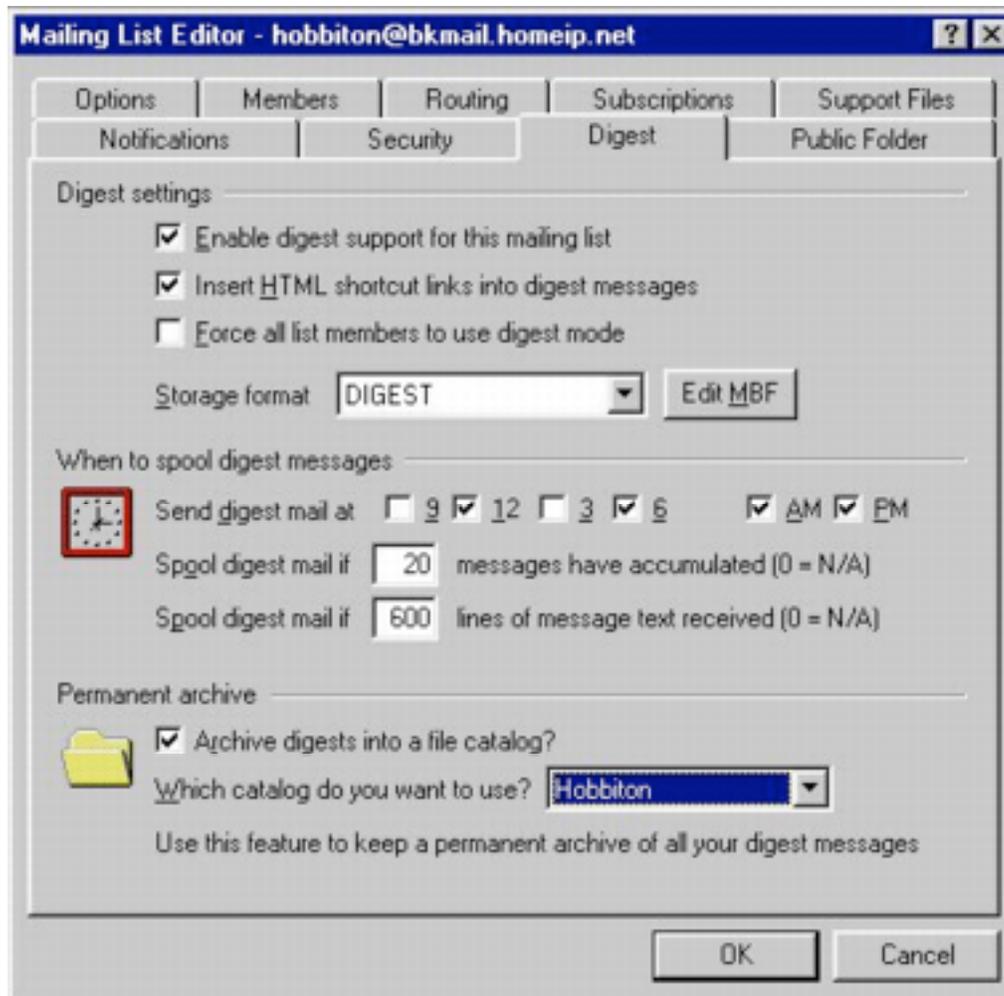
The illustration shows the Auto Responder dialog for an email account.



### Catalogs and Mailing Lists

Mailing List digests can be automatically archived in a catalog for access by anyone who knows the catalog name. The catalog must be set up through the **New Catalog** command before digests can be stored.

The illustration shows the Digest tab of the Mailing List Editor.



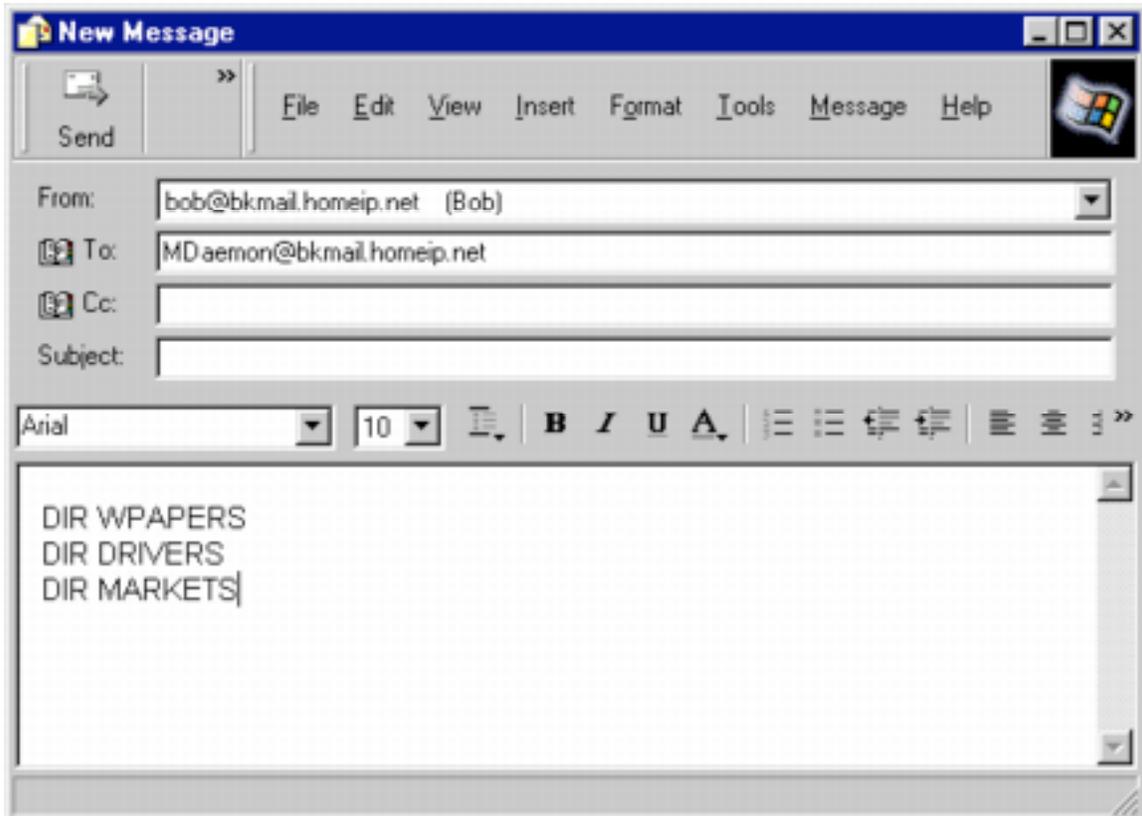
In the illustration, Digests are enabled, plus archived in a catalog.

### Accessing Catalogs Through Email

Catalogs are accessible only through email requests. The messages must be mailed to `MDaemon@domain`, where *domain* is something real such as **altn.com**.

There are two commands to use when accessing catalogs through email: DIR and GET. The DIR command returns a list of files available in a directory. The GET command returns the requested file. An email can contain more than one command.

The illustration shows three DIR commands in an email.



The format for the DIR command is:

`DIR catalogname`

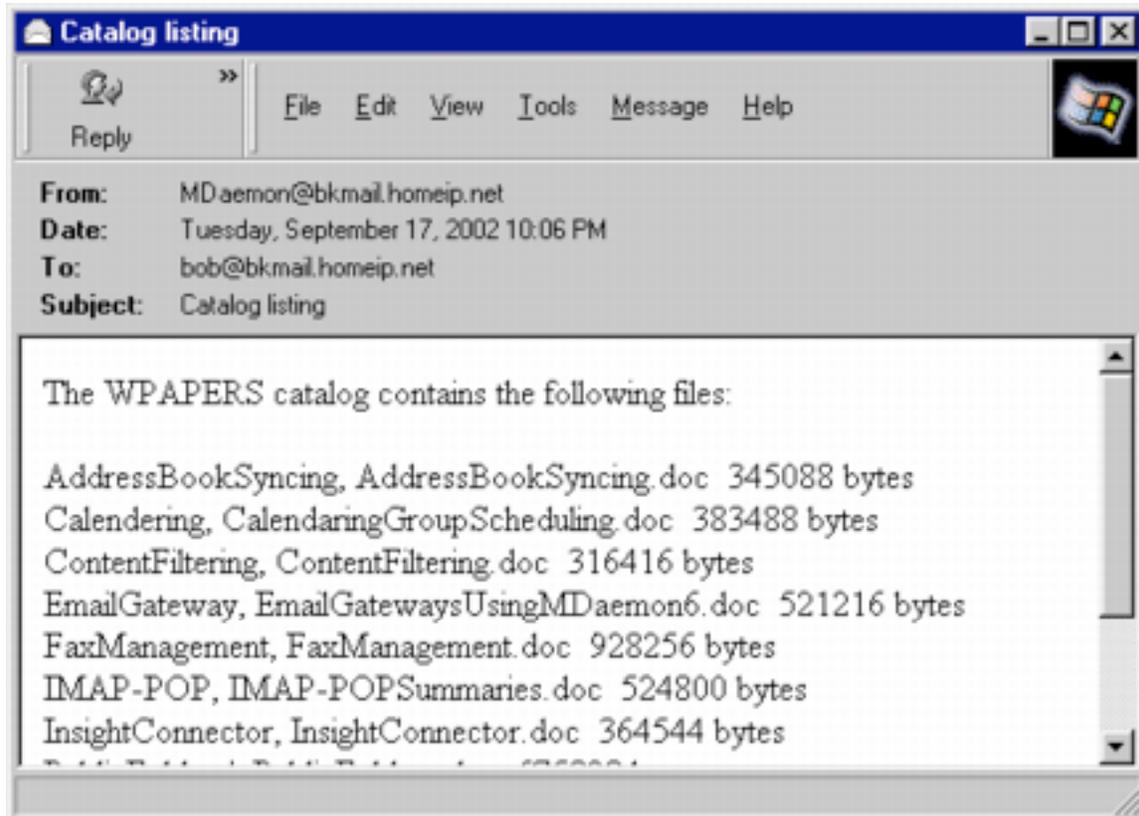
For example, DIR WPAPERS.

The format for the GET command is:

`GET catalogname shortcutname password`

For example, GET WPAPER Calendaring trustme

The illustration shows the results from a DIR command.



## Conclusion

Catalogs offer a quick, secure method of sharing files without the risk or expense of running an FTP or HTTP server. Catalogs are easy to set up and use. They can handle any type of file. When coupled with Auto Responders, catalogs can perform almost any imaginable function related to documents and system monitoring.