Frequently-Asked Questions

This page has been set up to answer common questions. It's not intended to provide a tutorial about IRC in general, but to address the peculiarities of freenode. If you can't find the answer to your question here, feel free to ask us in #freenode, where staff are voiced, or drop us a line to support at freenode dot net! Thank you.

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General Questions

What is freenode about? Why is it here?

freenode is a special-purpose, not a general-purpose, discussion network, currently implemented on Internet Relay Chat (IRC). It exists to support specific communities. It provides an interactive environment

for coordination and support of peer-directed projects, including those relating to free software and open source. Our aim is to help our participants to improve their communicative and collaborative skills and to maintain a friendly, efficient environment for project coordination and technical support. For more information about the network philosophy, please take a look **here**.

Should I create a channel on freenode?

That depends. Certain **channel categories** are considered to be on-topic and are listed on the **network policy page**. If you want to create a general-purpose chat channel, freenode is probably not for you. Similarly, if you want to create a channel to support some sort of unlawful activity, freenode is not the network you should be using.

Why is it called freenode?

Prior to the creation of the Peer-Directed Projects Center (PDPC) not-for-profit entity, the network was known as Open Projects. The new name, freenode, was chosen to mark the network's new status, having PDPC as its parent organization. PDPC is no longer, but the new name still evokes the best qualities of free software and open source. It suggests the non-hierarchical nature of the network, in which the individual channels are run by the groups which own them, and network staff works to maintain a relaxed and congenial environment.

Is the source code used for your servers publicly available?

Yes. We currently use ircd-seven, which can be found in its **GIT source repository**, and Atheme, our IRC services daemon, in **Atheme IRC services** and **freenode modules**. Both are offered under terms of the ISC License.

Are there minimum standards of conduct for using freenode?

The basic policies for the network are outlined **here**. Beyond that, we strongly urge you to adopt the **freenode channel guidelines** and **philosophy** to help us keep the network a friendly and useful place.

What is fST or freenode Standard Time?

People on freenode connect from time zones all around the world. To skip discussions of morning versus afternoon in any given time zone, freenode adopted the convention that when a user first joins or becomes active, it's considered morning, and when the user leaves or goes away, it is evening. This is also known as Universal Greeting Time (UGT).

It's still necesssary to coordinate on timestamps or specific meeting times, and in this context, fST is a jovial reference to UTC.

User Registration

Why should I register my nick?

Your nick is how people on freenode know you. If you register it, you'll be able to use the same nick over and over. If you don't register, someone else may end up registering the nick you want. If you register and use the same nick, people will begin to know you by reputation. If they're running IRC software which supports the **CAP** identify-msg, they'll be able to tell when someone is spoofing your identity.

If a channel is set to mode +r, you won't be able to join it unless you are registered and identified to NickServ. If you try to join, you might be forwarded to a different channel. If a channel is set to mode +q $~a, you won't be able to speak while on that channel unless you are registered and identified. Both of these modes are used to reduce channel harassment and abuse.

For more information on how to set up a registered nick, take a look **here**.

What is the recommended way to set up my IRC nickname?

Please follow these steps to set up your nick and configure your client. **Check off each step to make sure it's been done:**

1. Select a permanent, master nickname. If the nickname you want is registered but has **expired**, just **ask a staffer** and in most cases, we will be happy to drop it for you.

   Please avoid using the name of a community project or trademarked entity, to avoid conflicts. Write

down your password and be sure to keep the sheet of paper in a safe place.

2. Register your IRC nick:

    `/msg NickServ REGISTER ` *`password`* *`youremail@example.com`*

    Replace *`password`* with a secure, unguessable password that you keep secret.

3. The email address that you select will not be given out by staff, and is mainly used to allow us to help you recover the account in the event that you forget your password. For this reason, you are required to use a real, non-disposable, email address. Upon registering, you will receive an email with a verification command that you will need to run to complete the registration process. Failure to verify the account will cause it to be automatically dropped after about 24 hours.

4. To keep your email address private, rather than displaying it publicly, mark it as hidden (which is done by default for new accounts):

    `/msg NickServ SET HIDEMAIL ON`

5. It's useful, but not required, to have an alternate nick grouped to your account. For example, if your primary nick is `foo`:

    `/nick foo_`

    then identify to your primary account:

    `/msg NickServ IDENTIFY foo ` *`password`*

    and finally, group the new nick to your account

    `/msg NickServ GROUP`

6. We prefer you to use just one account, and group nicks to it as described above, rather than registering for multiple accounts. Grouping nicks in this way gives you the benefit of having all your nicks covered by the same cloak, should you choose to **wear a cloak**.

    The exception to this is where you might want to run a bot. You should register a separate account for your bot.

7. Configure your client to identify itself to NickServ automatically whenever it connects to freenode so that it's less likely you'll connect to the network without being identified to NickServ. The easiest approach is to specify your NickServ password as a server password.

    If your client supports server password, please set this up as *`accountname`*:*`password`*. Make sure to include the colon. This will allow you to identify to your services account on connect, regardless of the nickname you are using when you connect. For example:

    `/connect chat.freenode.net 6667 mquin:uwhY8wgzWw22-zXs.M39p`

What's the easiest way to identify to NickServ when I connect to freenode?

If your client supports **SASL**, that is best. Otherwise, just plug your NickServ password into your client as a server password. To make this work when connecting from a different nick than the one you've got registered, use *`nick`*:*`password`*. You'll be identified to NickServ automatically when you connect.

In some cases, it's more convenient to configure your client to send this command to achieve the same effect:

    `/msg NickServ IDENTIFY ` *`account password`*

We recommend you read and follow the steps of the **canonical nickname setup** to make sure your client identifies reliably to NickServ.

Why am I seeing `Cannot join channel (+r) - you need to be identified with services?`

This means that you need to **register** your nickname and verify your email address. If you have already done this, you probably need to **identify**, on ensure that you are identified before joining channels. (**This question** can help with that.)

How can I tell when someone might be spoofing a user's identity?

If your client supports CAP identify-msg, you can configure it to let you know when someone speaking on channel or via /msg is not identified to services. A script to take advantage of CAP identify-msg is currently available for **irssi**. It was originally written for the CAPAB command in dancer (hyperion), but has been modified to support the more versatile CAP command in charybdis (ircd-seven). If you want other people using this feature to know that you're you, have your client **identify to NickServ** when you connect to the network. You should also follow the **canonical setup steps** for your IRC nickname.

When do IRC nicknames expire?

We consider IRC nicks expired after they have not been used for 10 weeks plus (at staffer discretion) one additional week per full year of registration, up to a maximum of five additional weeks. Nicks which are at least two weeks old and which were last used less than two hours after their creation are also considered to be expired. These time limits do not apply to held nicks, which are allocated and dropped as needed. If the nick you want is someone's NickServ account name, it is considered expired only when the account itself is expired.

Nicknames that are not confirmed by a valid email address will be automatically dropped after 24 hours.

We occasionally prune the Services databases for deadwood, removing nicknames and channels that have not been in use for some time. Please ensure you IDENTIFY to avoid disappointment as your identifying is the only way we have of telling if your nickname is still in use.

How do you know the last time an IRC nickname was used?

We know this only as a result of your **identifying to NickServ** when you connect to the network. If you don't identify, we'll have no way to know that your nick is in use, and it will eventually be dropped. You should also follow the **canonical setup steps** for your IRC nickname. You can see the last time someone identified to NickServ for a nick with:

```
/msg NickServ INFO nick
```

The `Last seen:` field tells you the last time someone used the nick while identified.

How can I take over a registered nick that hasn't been used in a long time?

Nicks which are considered **expired** are not dropped automatically on a regular basis. If you ask a staffer, we'll usually be happy to manually drop the one you want so that you can re-register it.

I registered my nick and now someone else has it. Did someone steal it? How do I get it back?

To keep your registered nick, you must **continue to use it**. If you do not identify to your nick, it may eventually become **expired**. Once it becomes expired, someone can **ask to have it dropped**. When a nick has been dropped and picked up by another user, we are not able to take it back from them. That would be unfair to the user who picked it up. In other cases, someone could simply be using the nick while unidentified. You can force them to change their nick with:

```
/msg NickServ RELEASE yournick yourpassword
```

You may need to run the above command a second time if you get a message saying the nick is temporarily unavailable. You can also set enforce on your nick to have NickServ force users to identify to the account within 30 seconds in order to continue to use it:

```
/msg NickServ SET ENFORCE ON
```

Using the Network

Can I access the network via webchat?

There is an official freenode webchat running at **webchat.freenode.net**, you are welcome to use this. We run **Qwebirc**, an open source web IRC client originally designed by and for the **QuakeNet IRC network**.

There are many other such facilities available. Just consult **Yahoo** or **Google** for a list and try one of the pages on the list. Obviously freenode can not recommend a particular webchat facility bar our own, and we might have to limit access if they're abused, but we're happy to have you connect in this way.

What is this '~' in some hostnames?

The '~', or lack thereof, is in fact in the username field. Usernames will typically display a tilde ('~') at the beginning of the username if it is provided by the IRC client, instead of the identd or authd service. Usually ident or auth daemons are run by shell services, gateways, or other situations where multiple users may share the same host.

Try to avoid unnecessarily-broad bans. As the **catalysts** page implies, we don't support unnecessary use of bans. When banning, target the ban as narrowly as possible. With the tilde construction, banning someone with the user name "foo" without regard to whether they match ident is frequently done in this way:

> /mode *#channel* +b *nickmask*!*foo@*hostmask*

which bans both `foo` and `~foo`. Unfortunately, it also bans usernames such as:

```
foofoo
moofoo
goofoo
anythingfoo
```

Instead, ban just 'foo' by using the following:

> /mode *#channel* +b *nickmask*!~foo@*hostmask*

If identd or authd is in use, use:

> /mode *#channel* +b *nickmask*!foo@*hostmask*

How do I connect to freenode? How do I use the network?

Information on using the network can be found **here** and guides to ircd-seven, the code tree under development, can be found **here**. A list of servers can be found **here**.

How can I get a list of freenode public channels?

Check the **Gelhausen** site for a current list. To find channels about a specific topic you can also use our "alis" service:

> /msg Alis HELP LIST

How do I access freenode via IPv6?

Our main rotation contains both IPv4 and IPv6 addresses. Simply point your IRC client to `chat.freenode.net`.

Who are these people with "pdpc/supporter/" and "pdpc/sponsor/" on the beginnings of their hostnames?

Users who donated to the Peer-Directed Projects Center (PDPC) were given a supporter or sponsor cloak as an acklowledgement and token of our gratitude for their support of the network and the PDPC. The PDPC was subsequently shut down, and so these cloaks are no longer available, although you may still seem them from time to time.

When do IRC channels expire?

We consider **non-primary** IRC channels (those which start with "##") to be expired after they have not been used for 60 days. Staff will determine this by verifying that the founder has not been present in the channel for that duration of time. We might also idle in the channel to confirm that it really is not being used.

For active channels where the founder might have simply disappeared, staff may decide to have the regular users of the channel vote who the new channel founder should be.

Primary channels, namely those which start with a single "#", can *only* be dropped if a valid **Group Registration** is completed. Primary channels are not dropped due to founder nick drops or after a long period of time without use.

Who sets channel policy on freenode?

Channel policy is set by channel owners. Network staff set the basic **ground rules** for the use of the servers and we try to influence channel policies in a positive direction by urging channel owners to adopt

the freenode **channel guidelines**. They're formulated based on our experience encouraging the growth of relaxed, productive discussion environments. We strongly urge you to adopt these guidelines to help keep freenode a friendly and useful place for community discussion and project coordination.

Why do you freeze channels when groups leave the network?

Frequently when groups leave the network, they put up a pointer to the location of their new channel, on another network. This helps ensure that active users who were unaware of the move can find the new channel. These channels are subject to normal channel expiry policies.

How do I find out what's going on with the network?

We put information on the network in a variety of places. Your best ongoing source is this website; it provides reference information on the network, its philosophy, the software it uses, etc. In addition, staff send WALLOPS messages with time-sensitive status information (as well as a variety of general comments and announcements). To receive these messages, on most clients, you can use:

```
/umode +w
```

or

```
/mode yournick +w
```

For best results, place the command in your client's startup script.

In addition to WALLOPS we make announcements via our **blog**, and **twitter**. You can also connect with us on **Google+** .

Finally, we send information we judge to have global significance to our users via global notices. You don't generally have to do anything to see these, though they may appear on a different window of your client (along with the WALLOPS messages).

How can I get fewer notices from the staff?

Most of those messages are sent via WALLOPS, an IRC facility for displaying messages from server operators. On freenode, WALLOPS messages may contain non-critical comments and announcements from staff, as well as detailed server administration information. If you don't like the number of messages or the messages seem too trivial or detailed, you can turn them off by turning off user mode "w". On most clients this can be accomplished via:

```
/umode -w
```

or

```
/mode yournick -w
```

For best results, place the command in your client's startup script.

We also send information with global significance to our users via global notices. These notices are a bit more difficult to turn off; you can usually tell your client to ignore notices from specific staff members, notices from all staffers or all notices. **It's not recommended.** But on most clients, it works something like this:

```
/ignore *!*@freenode/staff/* NOTICE
```

My firewall logs show that someone from your network is trying to crack my box. What's going on?

You're probably seeing our open proxy detector. After numerous problems with clonebots, we began checking for open proxies and similar software on the hosts of clients connecting to our network. We use **BOPM** for this. It's popular with a number of IRC networks, and it's very reliable. For more information, please see our **policy page**.

I joined this channel and now I can't access freenode anymore. What's going on?

Apologies for the inconvenience. Due to problems with drones and automated clonebots, we've had to institute automated network bans when clients join certain channels. Please contact support at freenode dot net, providing your IP address to be unbanned.

Why did someone CTCP VERSION me?

CTCP VERSION causes your IRC client to return a client-name-and-version string to some requesting user. It's a service provided by your client which you can turn on and off. On many IRC clients, you can even set a false VERSION string. But the random person using the command on your client was probably just curious what IRC client you're running. Occasionally, a cracker will use CTCP VERSION to try to determine if your client is vulnerable to attack. Update your client regularly to avoid security problems, and don't be too worried unless they're doing more than just CTCP VERSION, or doing it over and over.

Why does user frigg send CTCP VERSION when I connect to the network?

CTCP VERSION is a **public IRC client interface** which you can turn on or off or even spoof. We've started to request version information using that interface when users connect to freenode, so that we can help users with client-related problems, track down abusive bots and deny network access from old, insecure releases of client software, as well as analyze client-use statistics to help us better support our users' needs. It helps us as administrators for you to leave CTCP VERSION available and un-spoofed, but you should upgrade your client frequently to reduce your exposure to attacks.

For privacy purposes, staff may publish that version information in statistical form, aggregated with that of other users. We'll be careful to avoid using it in ways which unnecessarily disrupt your use of the network.

Why do I get these [freenode-info] messages sometimes when I join a channel, or during a netsplit?

Messages labeled freenode-info contain important, non-time-critical information for freenode users. They're designed to appear with varying, random frequency. You're most likely to see them on your channel window around the time when you join a channel, or occasionally while rejoining from a netsplit.

I'm getting a lot of spam/porn/blank messages. What can I do to block them?

Sometimes freenode has to deal with infestations of spam bots. These bots often join large channels to get lists of people to spam via private message. We're working on long-term solutions to the problem. In the meantime, your best bet is to **register your IRC nickname and do the standard setup**, and then set your user mode to +R to filter out any private messages sent to you by unregistered users. Depending on which client you're running, one of these commands will set that user mode:

```
/umode +R
/mode yournick +R
/quote MODE yournick +R
/raw MODE yournick +R
```

If you run a support channel, please consider using something like:

```
/mode #channel +rf #channel-unregistered
```

This will forward unregistered users to a separate channel on join. You can let those users know about **registration options**, but try to provide them support on the 'unregistered' channel, as well — it's a way to help keep spammers from taking away support options from our unregistered users! Note that you will have to be +o in #channel-unregistered, or that channel must be +F to set the forward.

When I send private messages to my friend, it says that she's blocking messages from unidentified users. How do I fix it?

Your friend has set user mode +R to block messages from unregistered users. Just **register your IRC nickname and do the standard setup** and your problem will be solved.

Why is my cloak not applied initially when I auto-join channels?

Your account name and password must be sent to NickServ and verified, and then NickServ must tell the servers about your cloak. This process may take a little time, depending on how heavily services is loaded and the amount of lag between your server and services.

Some clients send your identification to NickServ and, without waiting, start to join channels. This may lead to showing your uncloaked host when you join the channel, followed shortly by a quit and re-join as your cloak is applied.

To prevent this, you may need to do one of the following (roughly in order of preference):

- Authenticate using SASL.

SASL is a method of identifying during your connection, before anything else happens. This is the best way to ensure you are cloaked immediately. A collection of scripts for common clients and instructions for setting up SASL can be found **here**.

- Wait to join channels until after the server notifies you that it has set your hidden host. This notification is done with a 396 numeric that looks like this:
  ```
  396 YourNick unaffiliated/youraccount :is now your hidden host (set by
  services.)
  ```
  Scripts to do this for **X-Chat** and **mirc** were kindly contributed by our users. You won't receive this numeric if your account or connection (for gateways) is not cloaked.
- Add a fixed amount of wait time before joining channels.
  This can be done on X-Chat with `set irc_join_delay`, or on irssi by adding `wait` *time* to the autosendcmd for the network.
- Don't auto-join channels; do it manually.

Does freenode provide SSL-based client access?

freenode supports SSL, for client and server connections. Users connecting via SSL will get user mode +Z to denote this. More information about connecting via SSL is on the**IRC servers** page.

Client SSL certificates are also supported, and may be used for services identification. More information about CertFP is on the **CertFP** page.

Why can't I join a certain channel?

There are a few things that might be preventing you from joining a channel. The first thing you should check is whether you are identified to NickServ. You can identify to NickServ with:

```
/msg NickServ IDENTIFY YourNick YourPassword
```

Certain channels have channel mode +r set, which prevents unidentified users from joining. You can check what channel modes are enabled on a channel with:

```
/mode #channel
```

The next thing you should check is whether or not you are banned from the channel. You can view the ban list with:

```
/mode #channel +b
```

Remember, you may be unintentionally affected by a large ban that was set, so pay particular attention to bans that include wildcards (* and ?). Also, keep in mind that if you are cloaked, a ban set against your IP address will still prevent you from joining. Finally, do not forget about extbans. A ban against $~a will work just like channel mode +r, and might not be initially obvious. An explanation about bans (including extbans) is available **here**. If you do find a ban set against you and you feel it is a mistake, you should contact the channel operators to discuss having it removed.

If neither of these methods work, you will want to check what other channel modes are enabled for the channel. modes such as +i, +k, and several others might be preventing you from joining.

If you are still unable to figure out why you can't join a certain channel, feel free to ask in #freenode.

How do I get unbanned/unquieted in a channel?

freenode tries to allow channels to run and manage themselves. As a result, channel operators are generally free to ban/quiet users for any reason they see fit. If you wish to discuss your ban/quiet, you will need to contact the channel operators. A list of operators can be found with

```
/msg ChanServ ACCESS #channel LIST
```

Operators will have the +o flag. One of these operators will have to unban/unquiet you, freenode staff will not intervene in most cases.

Why can't I talk in a certain channel?

There are two common reasons for being unable to talk in a channel. The first is that you might be quieted. You can view the quiet list for a channel with

```
/mode #channel +q
```

If you find a quiet set against you and you feel it is a mistake, you should contact the channel operators to discuss having it removed.

The second common reason for being unable to talk in a channel is that it has channel mode +m enabled. This mode prevents anyone who is not voiced from talking (if channel mode +z is also enabled, you will be able to talk, but only operators will see your messages).

How do I change my password?
If you are identified to your account, you can change your password yourself. To change the password, enter the following command:

```
/msg NickServ SET PASSWORD mynewpassword
```

Make sure that you are using SET PASSWORD instead of SETPASS. If you have forgotten your old password and are unable to identify, see **below** for information on how to have staff send you a password reset email.

What do I do if I forget my password?
If you forget your password, but still have access to the email account that is associated with the IRC account, staff can send a password reset email. Simply ask in #freenode or PM a staff member to have the email sent.

Is there a way to get notified when a user comes online?
The server supports a special command called 'MONITOR', which is a server side notify list. This command is a more efficient version of most 'NOTIFY' commands or friend list that your client might support. Consult your client's documentation for help. A script for irssi is available from the irssi **scripts repository**.

How do I contact an offline user?
freenode runs several **services**, one of which is MemoServ. You can send a message to a user via MemoServ with:

```
/msg MemoServ SEND nhandler Please contact me when you get this
message.
```

In this example, nhandler will be notified when he comes online about the message. If he has notifications enabled, he will also be notified via email. You can enable email notifications with:

```
/msg NickServ SET EMAILMEMOS ON
```

You can prevent yourself from receiving messages via MemoServ with:

```
/msg NickServ SET NOMEMO ON
```

What does it mean when I see
*** Notice -- TS for #channel changed from 1300123123 to 1255123123?
You may see a server notice like this when you join an empty, registered channel. The TS is the server adjusting the channel's timestamp, which is saved for every channel and used when recovering from netsplits. If a channel is created independently on two servers that are split, the older channel wins, and when the servers reunite, the newer channel's mode changes and timestamp will be undone and replaced by the older, triggering the notice you see. In short, it's a technical detail that you can safely ignore.

Why won't ChanServ leave my channel?
First, check if you have enabled GUARD by looking at the flags line in

```
/msg ChanServ INFO #channel
```

If you see GUARD listed as a flag, you can cause ChanServ to part by turning off GUARD:

```
/msg ChanServ SET #channel GUARD off
```

If ChanServ still won't leave, and you are the only other person in the channel, you are seeing ChanServ's

"inhabit" behavior. Some clients part and rejoin a channel when they are its only occupant, attempting to gain ops. This doesn't work on a network that has services, like freenode, and causes the client to rapidly join and part the channel.

To prevent this behavior, ChanServ remains in the channel until another person joins. This behavior cannot be disabled. If it is bothersome, you can momentarily join the channel on a second connection. This will cause ChanServ to part. If the channel empties and is recreated, the inhabit behavior will be triggered again.

Why can't I access freenode from Google App Engine, Opera Turbo, and similar services?

Google App Engine, Opera Turbo, and similar services are basically open proxies; they allow anyone to connect from any of a large number of IP addresses. Open proxies are blocked because they are often used as gateways to the network for disruptive behavior that is difficult to stop. There is nothing to uniquely identify a proxied user. For VPNs and similar anonymizing services we can (and do) mitigate this by requiring **SASL**. This allows a user to voluntarily provide a unique identifier that can be used to mitigate abuse if necessary. Webchat does not support SASL, so we have to block services like App Engine and Turbo.

Getting Help

How do I get help from the network staff?

All staff currently connected to the network will be voiced in #freenode. Keep in mind that all network staff are volunteers and you may sometimes have to wait for a staffer to become active. You can also issue the command

    /stats p

from within your IRC client. Certain clients, such have BitchX, have bugs which make it harder to use the command; in those cases you may have to type something like /quote STATS p. You'll be provided a current list of on-call freenode staffers. Feel free to message one or more staffers as necessary until you find someone who can help you. Not all freenode staffers are listed; please use this list as your indication of current availability.

Can I get a hostname cloak?

You can ask for an unaffiliated cloak in #freenode. This is our standard cloak and normally shows unaffiliated/*youraccountname*. You will need a **registered nickserv account**. Remember to verify your email address. Some of our registered groups offer their own cloaks for their projects. To obtain one of these, you need to find the group contact for the group you are interested in, and ask them to arrange the cloak for you.

We generally offer only one cloak per person, and a cloak is applied to a **nickserv account**. If you want a cloak for your bot, please create a separate account for it before asking. Unaffiliated bot cloaks look like unaffiliated/*youraccountname*/bot/*botname*.

As always, please observe good behaviour and adhere to network policies whilst wearing cloaks. We reserve the right to refuse to cloak accounts, and to remove cloaks from accounts if necessary.

Lastly, note that a cloak does not guarantee that your IP address remains hidden. If this is very important to you, we'd suggest that you look at the **Tor hidden service**.

How do we set up cloaking to identify participants in our FOSS project?

Groups with an approved **group registration** on file can request cloaks for their participants. During the group registration process, we'll work out an appropriate cloaking prefix to identify your group. Your group contact will be responsible for contacting us, as needed, to designate the IRC nicknames of participants who are eligible to have your project cloaks, as well as the specifics of the cloaks.

Until **GMS** complements services, this process will remain a mostly-manual one, so please don't hesitate to ping a staffer if you don't receive a response within a couple of weeks or so.

Groups and Group Contacts

What is the purpose of group registration?

When you register your group or organisation, you indicate your official participation in the network. Registration allows you to reserve, acquire and control channels associated with your group name and allows you to provide your participants with hostname cloaks. At some point, registration will be required to create permanent primary channels on freenode.

What level of activity is expected from groups registered on freenode?

No minimum level of activity is expected or required from registered groups. You need not sponsor a server, provide your members, participants or employees with hostname cloaks or actively moderate the channels reserved to you. Registration indicates your official participation in freenode and provides your group with facilities and capabilities which you can use as needed.

What functions can group contacts perform?

Group contacts represent your group to freenode staff. Group contacts can request cloaks for group members or project participants. They can request changes in the channel founder or access list for any channel reserved to your group.

Group contacts are also invited to sit on the Group Advisory Board, or GAB as we refer to it, which has been introduced to allow the projects who use our services to have a voice in shaping the future of freenode and which direction we take in future and how we can best help create environments that promote cross project collaboration, sharing of resources and bringing people together, on and offline.

How do we set up group contacts?

Our **group registration** page provides basic reference information for the registration process. Group registration indicates official participation by your group or organisation in freenode, so discuss it with your board or leadership and have them make an official decision before proceeding.

Then, have a board representative, a manager or a member of your core group, as appropriate, fill out a **group contact form**, selecting "I am: a primary contact person" and providing his or her own contact information. More than one primary contact form can be submitted, as appropriate. You can also have one or more active group contacts **fill out the group contact form**, selecting "I am: a contact person being alternate."

What is the difference between a *primary* and an *alternate* group contact?

A *primary* contact has the authority to represent your group, project or organisation and to verify that your group has approved its registration with freenode. For a legal entity, a primary contact can be an upper-level manager or a member of your board. For an informal group, a primary contact should be your project lead or a member of the core committee that makes decisions for your group.

An *alternate* contact, where specified, is an individual who does not have clear authority to represent your group and must be alternate by at least one *primary* contact.

How are group cloaks formatted?

Group cloak components appear in left-major order and are separated by slashes ('/'). They are:

1. **Group or project name:** We'll provide you with a group name and with optional project names. For each cloak you request, you should select a name from the set we've reserved for you.

2. **Cloak hierarchy:** You can select "inside" tokens to indicate the user's role in your project or group. These might include words like developer, staffer, support, member or even donor. You can create a hierarchy of roles if you wish. "Inside" tokens and any cloak hierarchy are entirely your choice, and some projects omit them.

   Please use the token "bot" to indicate automated utility clients.

3. **Unique identifier:** The last token of a group cloak is a unique identifier for the user to whom the cloak belongs. Examples: the user's name, their forum name, their committer id or account id on your server, or their master IRC nick. Whatever you choose must be unique within the context of your project or group.

   Dual cloaks, where a period-separated label to the token bearing the name of some other project is inserted into the cloak, are strongly discouraged and are only applied, as for all cloaks, at staff

discretion and with the consent of group contacts involved and the user.

To whom may we offer a group cloak?

Group cloaks indicate a relationship with your group or project. You may offer a cloak to any individual with whom you want to assert such a relationship. For example, you might want to cloak group members or organisational employees, developers, administrative or staff personnel or even donors. It's your choice. You request the cloak and we'll offer it to the person you specify. They'll decide whether to accept it.

How do we request group or project cloaks?

To request a cloak, just provide us with your user's master IRC nickname and the proposed cloak. You can request a list of cloaks or cloaking changes at one time. If it's a short list, check with **first level support** and we'll be happy to help. If it's a longer list, please email it to support at freenode dot net and mark your email as containing cloak updates for your project. You can still check with first-level support to speed things along.

We'll process your cloak updates as soon as we can. Global changes, such as those involved in a group name change, will probably take longer.

What plans do you have to automate the group contact function?

We are working on GMS (Group Management System) which will be a "dashboard" allowing group contacts to easier manage their groups namespace (channels, cloaks, access lists etc) via IRC (Services) and a web-frontend. If you would like to help out with GMS, head over to **dev.freenode.net/GMS** and see if you have any skills we could use!

When will group contact processing be automated?

Due to very light availability of coding help, we can't predict when GMS will be finished. We'll keep you posted.

I haven't received a response on my group contact form yet. What's up?

As of June 2012, group registration has been suspended. Existing GRF forms will not be processed, for reasons discussed in that blog entry. If you filed a GRF-f, please **check in with us** if you haven't heard anything, as almost all GRF-fs have now been replied to.

How do our group members request hostname cloaks?

You should provide your members with the name of someone associated with your group who can process their requests. We may not be able to point them directly to your group contact information, as that is considered private between the group and freenode.

freenode Project Organisation

Who runs freenode?

About 40 volunteer staffers around the planet run the network, under the direction of the head of the project, **Christel Dahlskjaer**.

How do I volunteer?

If you spend time in #freenode or elsewhere around the network, it's possible you'll be asked if you'd like to perform some staff role. We usually look for people who haven't asked.

Do server owners run the network?

No, they don't. Server owners may be tapped for a staff role, but the roles of staffer and facilities host are as separate as we can make them. On most IRC networks, the roles are combined, which often results in heavy IRC politics and uneven service. We can't eliminate politics, but we do our best to minimize the effect of such activity on the network.

What privileges do staff members get?

It varies from staff member to staff member. No minimum level of access is guaranteed to any staff member, including those who host servers.

Who administers the servers?

Staff members update server configurations and install new releases of the software. They're responsible for routing changes and server problem resolution. Facilities hosts are asked to provide technical contacts

who can perform administrative functions in areas where **freenode** staffers have no access.

How do I link my server?

Servers are hosted, not linked. For information on how to host a server, please take a look **here**.

Who do I complain to?

If you have a constructive suggestion, please email it to: support at freenode dot net. If you would like to suggest a server feature, please email it to: features at freenode dot net. If you think you've found a bug in the server code, please email a detailed bug report to: bugs at freenode dot net. Please avoid sending flames and abusive messages to staff, particularly while we're trying to solve a problem. It may be good for your ego, but it doesn't help the network.

Do you get a lot of complaints?

Not so many, but the ones we get can be, uh, very memorable. When things are running well, people tend to forget how much work it takes to keep **freenode** running. If you like the service, tell a staffer. It'll make our day. :)