Error searching MITDIR - Query refused or Request was not processed

Q: Error searching MITDIR - Query refused or Request was not processed

- When looking up people in the MIT directory, you may get an error if you look up too many people.
- If you use the “people search” function on the web page http://web.mit.edu/ you may get an error page saying:

  Error
  Request was not processed due to an error.
  500 Could not finger <person>@mitdir.mit.edu - Number of queries has exceeded allotted time period
cgiemail 1.3

- If you use the command-line program “finger”, you may get error text saying:

  $ finger '<person>@mitdir.mit.edu
  [DIRECTORY.MIT.EDU]
  Query refused. Number of queries has exceeded allotted time period.

Explanation

MIT directory searches are limited, and only allow a certain number of searches per minute. This limit helps guard against spammers who might want to copy every name out of the directory.

- If you are using the People Search from web.mit.edu, the limit-counter is shared across all visitors of web.mit.edu. Your own searches could be locked out if you do many searches, but can also be locked out if someone else before you did too many searches.

- If you are using the command-line program “finger”, the limit-counter can detect your individual IP address, and tracks your own personal searches. You will be temporarily locked out once the maximum number of lookups from your IP address has been reached.

- The lock will reset after a few minutes (up to 15), allowing you to do more lookups.

Solutions

If the People search on web.mit.edu doesn't work, you can do directory lookups in other ways:

- You can use the mobile directory lookup either from your mobile device or from your computer's web browser. Go to https://mobi.mit.edu/directory/index
- If you can log into OWA (http://owa.mit.edu/) you can use its Address Book to search for people.
  - There is no rate limit for searching the OWA Address Book; it requires you to log in, which proves that you have an MIT account and are not a stranger.
- If your mail program has an address book built in, you can search the MIT Directory through your mail program's address book.
  - Microsoft Outlook with an Exchange account - searching the Outlook Address Book will get answers from the MIT Directory.
  - Apple Mail with an Exchange account - searching the Mac OS X Address Book will get answers from the MIT Directory.
  - People who still have traditional Cyrus IMAP accounts - you can add MIT's LDAP server for directory lookup, but this will only work on-campus.
    - [archive:Outlook 2007 for Windows - Configuring for LDAP]
    - [archive:Apple Mail for Mac OS X - Configure to use the MIT Directory (LDAP)]
- If you are comfortable using command line programs, you can look up people using the command “finger” at a Windows Command prompt or Unix or Mac Terminal prompt:

  finger "<person>"@mitdir.mit.edu