Email Notification Variables and Constants

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This article applies to the following:
Product Version: IssueNet 5.0 and later
Component(s): Administrator
Solutions(s): All

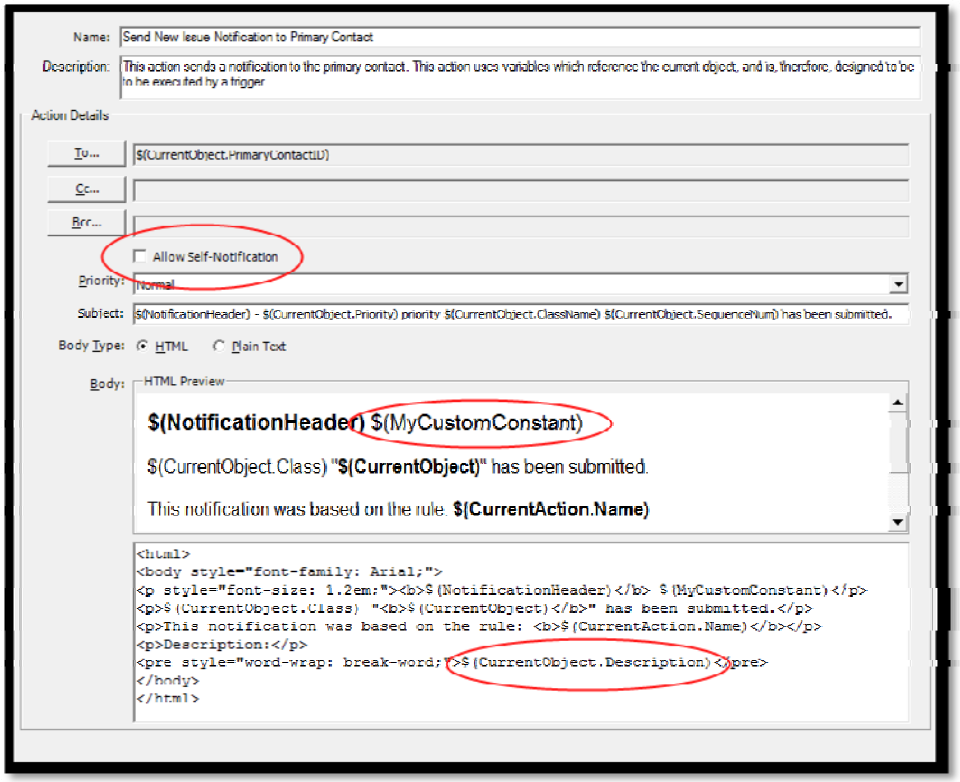
The theme of the IssueNet 5.0 release was simplification. With the power and flexibility of the IssueNet Platform well established, Elsinore's team focused on overall ease of use and configuration. One capability that received significant attention was the notification system. To simplify notification setup and maintenance, Elsinore made several changes:

- Removed the requirement for MSMQ services
- Added simpler mail delivery options
- Removed the Service Manager
- Moved notification templates into the database as an attribute of each notification action

Ironically, this dramatic simplification of the notification system resulted in new flexibility in the design of notification rules and templates. This Tech Tip reviews the changes and how they can be used to add new kinds of information to notification templates and simplify their maintenance.

The following screen capture highlights three changes we will focus on:

- The use of standard IssueNet variables in notification templates
- The ability to define custom notification constants
- The ability to enable or disable self notification per notification action



Using Standard IssueNet Variables

The changes to remove the notification service and MSMQ requirement also allowed notification templates to support standard IssueNet notification templates. For example, in the screen capture the variable $(CurrentObject.Description) instead of $(Description). The change is, however, more than stylistic. Using standard IssueNet variables you can access a much wider variety of information and simplify your notification rules.

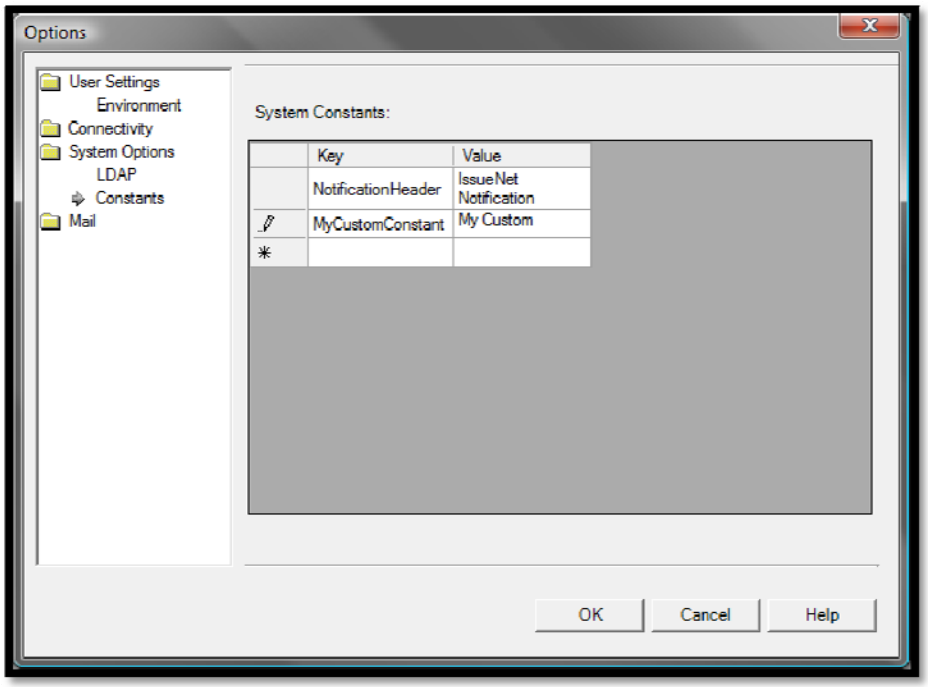
For example, let's suppose that you want to send a notification about a support ticket that contains information for the issue as well as information from the related customer record. Let's also suppose that you want to trigger the notification action from a workflow transition. Using the old syntax, including information from two different objects in one notification template was impossible. The action specified the object and all variables in the templates referenced properties of that one object. Using standard Issuenet variables a notification template can contain the variable $(WorkflowIssue.Subject) to substitute the subject of the issue as well as the variable $(WorkflowIssue.SubmittedByID->Phone 1) to substitute the phone number of the customer contact related the issue.

Using Custom Constants in Notifications

In previous versions of IssueNet the Service Manager allowed you to specify values for a fixed set of constants that could be used in notification templates. An IssueNet constant allows you to specify a fixed value which is substituted by a variable. For example, if you want to reference the URL to your support site in your notifications, but anticipate that that URL may change in the future, you can define a constant for the URL and use the variable for that constant in your notifications as opposed the literal

value. When the URL changes, you can simply change the constant values instead of editing the literal value in every template.

With the removal of the Service Manager, constants were also migrated to the IssueNet database and users were allowed to define their own constants. By selecting **Tools|Options |System Options|Constants** in the Administrator you can enter new constant names and values. Once you have created a constant you can use it as a standard IssueNet variable by including it in the standard variable syntax, e.g., $(MyCustomConstant). By using constants anywhere your notification templates contain common values or boilerplate text you can simplify your template design and maintenance.



Per Rule Self Notification

Another notification option which was made part of notification actions is the option for self notification. Self notification, which used to be a global setting, determined whether notifications were sent to the user who performed the action that generated the notification. Generally users want self notification disabled. However, self notification can be useful when testing new notification rules and templates as well as instances where users use the notifications as reminders.

As the screen capture illustrates, self notification is an option which can be enabled for each notification action. By toggling this option you can more easily test new notification templates and fine tune your notification recipients without disturbing your users.