

Guidance for Using Email

Addressing Messages

Use the 'To' line to include the addresses of people to whom you wish to send your message. Use the 'CC' line to copy other recipients who may be interested in the content of your message. Separate each address with a comma followed by a space, eg. Fred Bloggs <fred.bloggs@xxx.ac.uk,> Jack Smith <jack.smith@yyy.ac.uk>. The email address should be enclosed within angle brackets if you are also using the person's name. If not, the angle brackets can be omitted, jack.smith@yyy.ac.uk.

Sending copies to multiple addresses

- If you are sending a message to a large number of recipients who may or may not know each other, you should protect their identities by using the 'BCC' facility.
- Address the message to yourself and then include the addresses of the other recipients in the 'BCC' line.

His method will also ensure that you comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and respect the privacy of others.

Address book

- Most email programs automatically add the addresses in your 'To' line to the your address book.
- Some programs will also automatically add incoming addresses to your address book.
- It's good practice to prune this at regular intervals so that you can remove out-of-date or unwanted addresses.

Sending/receiving attachments

- Mention in your message that you are sending an attachment so that the recipient is aware of this.
- It is easier and safer to save a received attachment as a file on your desktop rather than to open it directly from the email.
- If you receive a message from an unknown address that has an attachment be wary of opening the attachment – it could contain a virus or Trojan.

Responding to messages

- It's good practice to include anything important from the received message when you respond to it – this then gives a complete record of your email conversation and indicates the subject whereas if you start a new message the recipient may not immediately link it. Enclose any quoted material within < and >. Some programs will do this automatically.
- Quoting a long previous message may result in all the messages in a conversation going back and forth and getting longer and longer thus taking longer to transmit and clogging up inboxes!

Signatures

- A signature or 'sig' at the end of your message should give your name and contact details preceded by two hyphens. These allow the software to detect where the signature begins.

Emphasis

- It's not usually possible to underline words in emails or to use bold or italics. The usual method of emphasising words is to enclose them with * or _ .
- Flaming or 'shouting': Using all capitals to make a point is known as 'flaming' or 'shouting' and is not recommended. Also, it's not recommended to send a message all in lower case.

Security, anti-virus, phishing, spam

- It's in your own interest and is thoughtful of others to ensure that you have an up-to-date and effective anti-virus program installed which will check your outgoing and incoming emails.
- Phishing is a form of internet fraud and is illegal. Real websites are cloned so that the originators can obtain usernames and passwords from their victims. The originators of phishing emails rely on people following links within the emails. Such emails frequently purport to come from banks, and organisations such as eBay and PayPal. Phishing emails can be sent to the genuine organisation or forwarded to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (reportphishing@antiphishing.org). Make sure you include all the headers.
- Spam is the internet equivalent of junk mail – cheap to send and reaches hundreds or thousands of recipients. Some anti-virus programs will automatically filter out spam messages. If a spam message does slip through it's not advisable to respond to it, rather delete or reject it. If there is a hyperlink in the message inviting you to unsubscribe, ignore it. Responding to it will indicate to the spammer that your address is 'live' and you'll lay yourself open to further spam.

Jokes, Virus warnings, Hoax Alerts

- 'Jokes' – what amuses you may not amuse others, so only forward them to people whom you know really well!
- Don't forward virus warnings or hoax alerts to other people without first checking the veracity of these messages.