

## Suggestions on the use of email so as to reduce hackers and spammers

We have had a number of members' who email address books have been hacked by spammers. Indeed one member had hackers sending out a distressing email, in her name, asking for money to be wired to her as she was in difficulties in Spain.

E-mail is a fast and convenient way to communicate on the Internet. To stay safe when e-mailing, follow these practices every time you send or receive a message:

- **Don't share sensitive personal information.** Never share passwords, Social Security numbers, and credit card numbers in e-mail.
- **Choose who you e-mail.** Just because someone sends you an e-mail doesn't mean you need to read it or respond. Set up your spam filters to be restrictive, and check your spam folder periodically for legitimate messages.
- **Think twice before you open attachments or click links in e-mail.** If you don't know the sender, delete the e-mail. If you do know the sender but weren't expecting an attachment, double-check that the person actually sent the e-mail.
- **When sending e-mail to a group of people who don't know each other, use the Bcc line to protect everybody's identity.** Place all the e-mail addresses on the Bcc (or Blind Carbon Copy) line of the message. That way, no recipient can see the e-mail addresses of other recipients. This respects their privacy and protects their accounts from spammers.

**YOU MUST ALSO CONSIDER CHANGING YOUR PASSWORD ON A REGULAR BASIS. MIX UP LETTERS AND NUMERALS AND THE CASE OF LETTERS. Eg:**

**Hastingsu3a** is easy to hack whereas **HaStInGsu3a** is not as easy.

However it is even better to think of a key phrase and take the initial letter of each word.

**King Harold Won Battle Hastings** and add a number (1066) and then reverse it thus:  
**KhWbH6601**

You are also advised to make each password unique. This is not as difficult as you may think. Take your key phrase and then add two letters relating to the institution you are trying to contact. Thus for Nationwide the phrase above becomes: **KhWbH6601Nw**

With emails there are two ways to use them - you can use webmails, such as Windows Live Hotmail, gmail or yahoomail - these are free to use, can be accessed anywhere in the world on any computer with an internet connection, and are not connected to your ISP - so should you want to move supplier in the future and use their email service, you can lose your email address. So using a webmail is the way forward.

**IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS WHAT YOU DO WITH EMAILS IS THE USERS OWN CHOICE AND THE DECISION IS YOURS.**

**HOWEVER ALL GROUP CONVENORS WHO SEND BULK MAILINGS ARE URGED TO MAKE USE OF THE BEACON DATA BASE SYSTEM TO PROTECT OUR MEMBERS IDENTITY.**