






Emailing - To Bcc or Not to Bcc, that is the question!

Did you know that every email client includes 3 address fields? **To**, **Cc**, and **Bcc**, which stand for “[deliver] to”, “carbon copy”, and “blind carbon copy”, respectively. These terms originated in physical correspondence and have carried on into email usage.

Do you know when you should use these and what each one does?

Here is a simple guide for Stanway U3A Group Leaders, Committee members etc to ensure you are using email sensibly and securely. This may also be of general interest to other members.

<p>To:</p> 	<p>This should be used for single recipient, or small numbers of primary recipients where they usually know each other’s email addresses and often need to contribute to email discussion, for example as part of a small group or committee.</p> <p>Their email addresses will be visible, and anyone using the “Reply All” facility will be able to send their response to all “To” and “CC” recipients.</p> <p>Note that if the email is subsequently forwarded then everyone’s email address will also be visible to the new recipient(s).</p>
<p>Cc:</p> 	<p>This should be used to copy in others for information only, and where the numbers are small.</p> <p>Their email addresses will be visible to everyone and they will receive any “Reply All” responses. Their email address will also be visible if the email is forwarded to new recipient (s). Use Bcc if you do not want these features.</p>
<p>Bcc:</p> 	<p>This should be used when emailing larger numbers of recipients or where the email is mainly for information and a response is not required or expected. For example when issuing newsletters, notifying meeting/event cancellations, change of venue etc</p> <p>Bcc email addresses will be invisible to recipients, and anyone who attempts to send a “Reply All” will only reply to the sender and not to everyone else.</p> <p>It is recommended to start the email by stating to which group the email is being sent, for example “To all members of (xxxx) group”.</p> <p>Please note: Ensure you also enter something into the “To” field, usually your own email address. Sometimes an email system seeing no recipient in the “To” field might copy the BCC contents to it.</p>

What does it matter which one I use? There are several good reasons:

1. When sending emails to a lot of members, if you don't use Bcc you're actually sharing the personal contact information of a lot of people with a lot of other people they may not wish to share with. This is disrespectful and likely to breach data protection legislation by sharing personal contact information without the permission of the individual(s) in question.
2. You don't know how secure each recipient's equipment is, they may not have up to date antivirus and antispam software etc. Emails to large numbers of recipients without using Bcc are vulnerable to malicious software and spammers to harvest. It only takes one recipient with undetected malware on their PC/Laptop/tablet etc to put everyone at increased risk of spam/phishing emails and increased exposure to malicious software.
3. Finally, the irritation factor - when emailing information to large numbers, not everyone needs to see someone's reply that they'll "be there" !! You're adding to everyone's inbox unnecessarily.

Remember - it's your responsibility to keep personal data you are entrusted with safe and secure.

Alec Anderson

Stanway U3A IT and Data Security Officer

Email: dataU3Astanway@gmail.com

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