IT Guidelines

Email Protocol

Email is a universally accepted mode of communication and is the best way of communicating with members and officers within our organisation. To be effective there are some simple guidelines we should follow.

There are many ways that email can be sent and received. Some people use an "email client" such as Office Outlook. Mozilla Thunderbird, Windows Mail, Apple Mail and many others. An email client is software that accesses a service provider bringing the mail into the computer. Others use "webmail", which involves logging in the service providers website to create and read their mail. Whichever process is used the message itself is similar so that these guidelines apply to all.

Primary addressees [To:]

These are the people who are directly concerned with the content of the message. This may be because action is required. (e.g. calling a meeting) or because the message contains information that everyone should know. (e.g. the newsletter has been despatched).

Copy addressees [Cc:]

These are people who are being kept informed about a subject in which they have an interest. It is not usual to have many copy addressees. Copy addressees should only be included if they really should know the contents of the message.

Blind copy addressees [Bcc:]

When an email is sent to a large number of people their email addresses should be put into Bcc. This avoids the header of the message being cluttered unnecessarily with several lines of addresses. It also avoids exposing the email addresses to other people who may have no need to see them.

Bcc is also used to send a copy of a message to a third party without the primary addressee knowing. This should be used with caution. If a bcc addressee "replies to all", that reply will go to the primary addressee from whom the bcc addressee is concealed. It is safer to "forward" the sent message to a third party. This will ensure that there is no possible link to the primary addressee and a comment can be added.

Sending a message with many bcc addressees

When sending a message with many bcc addressees, people often put their own email address as the primary addressee and all the recipients as bcc addressees. This does not indicate which group of people have been sent the message. It is better to create a new contact in the contacts list. The name of the contact is the name of the group, for example "U3A Yoga

Group", and the email address should be the email address of the group leader or the person sending the message. "U3A Yoga Group" should be selected as the primary addressee and all the members of the group should be bcc. This way it is clear that the message has been sent to all members of the U3A Yoga Group.

The number of bcc addressees permitted in one message.

To minimise Spam messages all internet service providers (ISP) monitor the number of bcc addresses attached to an email. None of the ISPs will declare the limit at which a message is blocked or how the limit is calculated.

The biggest restriction is on messages sent by an "email client" (see para 2). Most ISPs will block messages with more than 25–50 bcc addressees when sent from "email client" software. They may also lock the account for 24 hours. Normal communication rarely exceeds these limits but if more than 25-30 bcc addressees are included in a message it is prudent to split the list into two messages.

The number of bcc addressees allowed in a message sent by webmail (see para 2) is a much higher. This number varies in different ISPs, none of whom will declare their limit. However, our newsletter is sent via Virgin Media webmail to more than 400 bcc addressees in a single message. Occasionally this message has been blocked and had to be re-sent in batches. Understandably, all ISPs maintain strict secrecy about their anti-spam procedures.

Documents.

There is no standard software for producing documents. Many people use Microsoft Word, which exists in several different versions (Word 2000, Word 2003, Word 2007 etc) Documents produced in all versions of Word after 2003 are compatible. A document sent to someone using Word 2003 or earlier should be saved as "Word 97-2003".

Open Office and Libre Office are also in common use. These are similar, and both produce documents in "Open" format. Libre Office and Open Office can open documents produced in Word format and Word can open documents in Open format. However, although the documents can be shared across these different office packages, the original layout may be changed and some features may appear differently. It is perfectly acceptable to exchange working documents in Word or Open format, particularly if the recipient is intended modify the contents.

A document that is intended to be a reference document to be read and not modified, should be produced as a PDF (Portable Document Format). This would include all guides (such as this document) and all forms. Documents created in Word, Open Office or Libre Office can be saved as a PDF.

PDFs are read using a PDF reader which cannot edit the document. Thus, the content and layout cannot be changed. Some people have a PDF Editor such as Adobe Acrobat, which can change the content and layout of a PDF.

The same logic is applied to spreadsheets.

An Apple computer can run commonly used office software such as Word but also has an integral office system iWork in which Pages, Numbers, and Keynote are similar to Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, respectively. Apple users are well aware of the need to create compatible documents for Windows computers.

Material for the Newsletter

The Stubbington U3A Newsletter is produced using Publisher (part of the MS Office Suite). Publisher, like other publishing software, produces very clear text and sharp illustrations. Text from Word, Open Office and Libre Office can be inserted into Publisher. Photographs and other images in a variety of formats can also be inserted. However, PDFs present a particular problem. A PDF can only be inserted without modification and does not go through the process that publishing software uses to create good appearance. The images will be "fuzzy" and lack clarity. This is unavoidable when a commercially produced leaflet is included, but it is better if material for the newsletter is submitted in text formats with separate illustrations. The editors will create the final product.

Fonts

All office systems provide a wide range of fonts. In general, the use of many different fonts or quirky fonts in a document will distract from the content. Also, some of the lesser used fonts may not be in every computer and will be replaced on opening by a standard font.

Usually only two fonts need be used. The text should be a serif font such as Times New Roman or Adobe Garamond. Serifs, small lines attached to the end of a stroke in a letter, helps the reader's eye move along the line. Headings stand out better if they are in a non-serif font such as Arial or Calibri.

The recommended font size for comfortable reading is 12 point. Headings may be 14 point. (Point is a measure of letter height. 72 point is approximately 1 inch or 2.54 cm. 12 point is approximately 4mm. 14 point is approximately 5mm.)

In this document the headings are Arial 14 point (bold). The text is Times New Roman 12 point.

Documents Attached to Emails

Most computer users have a broadband connection, which allows quite large files to be attached to emails. Attachments of around 6-8 mb are now quite acceptable. Multiple attachments whose total exceeds this should be split into separate emails.

Management of Confidential Information

- Distribution of confidential information should be strictly limited and only sent on a need-to-know basis. When use of a document by members is justified, it must be protected by an easy-to-remember pass phrase that is known only to the users.

- Regular backups of the information shall be made and kept on separate media.

- Passwords should not be sent in the same email, or message, as the password protected document.

- Members are to advise any change of personal details to the Membership Secretary who will notify other parties as necessary, all changes in membership details should be placed in the body of the email.

- Members should be encouraged to contact the Membership Secretary by email.

- Stubbington U3A Data Protection Policy must be adhered to – see separate Policy document.

Stubbington U3A Logo

The Stubbington U3A logo consists of an arced, upper case, drop shadow 'STUBBINGTON' over the Official U3A Logo.

The "STUBBINGTON" font is HandelGotDlig and the colour is Pantone 287 blue.

The U3A logo colours are Pantone 287 blue and 123 gold.

The font of "U3A" is Richmond Hill 2. The font of the text underneath "U3A" is HandelGotDLig.

These are the only permitted colours and fonts when using the U3A logo.

The Stubbington U3A logo can be downloaded from the members' page of the group website. Members are encouraged to use the Stubbington U3A logo in policy documents, forms, publicity etc.

Two larger versions of the logo are available from the group webmaster. These are intended for use in screen presentations.

The official U3A font, HandelGotDlig, should not be used for the text of a document in which the U3A Logo appears.

The Stubbington Newsletter

The Newsletter is produced using Microsoft Publisher. In addition to news it includes details of forthcoming events, a directory of the groups and a monthly summary of when the groups meet.

The directory of groups has active links to the group pages of the Stubbington U3A website. These links function only when the Newsletter is read on a PC, tablet or iPad.

The Newsletter is usually produced and distributed during the weekend which is ten days before each monthly meeting. The deadline for material to be included in the Newsletter is noon on the Friday of that weekend.

The Newsletter editors maintain a list of members' email addresses and the Newsletter is distributed as an email attachment. More than 90% of the members use email. Those who do not have an email address, may pay to have the Newsletter posted to them.

Dates

This Policy was originally adopted by the Executive Committee on 20 October 2016.

It was reviewed and amended October 2019

Date for Review: October 2020