

Forwarding E-mail Messages

- Forwarded e-mail messages usually contain information the addresses of all the people who have previously received the message. As messages get forwarded, that list of addresses builds up. Not only is it annoying for people to have to scroll through all that junk, it can also be dangerous. If one recipient's computer has a virus, that computer can send the virus to all of those people. If one recipient's computer has spyware, that computer can collect all those addresses and send them to spammers, meaning more spam for everyone! To avoid this, when you forward e-mail, delete all of the other addresses that appear in the body of the message before you forward it on. While you're at it, it's also nice to correct any errors or weird formatting (you know how the lines sometimes wrap funny or are otherwise messed up).
- When sending e-mail to more than one person (like those jokes you just have to send to all your friends), do not put their addresses on the To: or Cc: lines. Instead, put them on a Bcc: (blind carbon copy) line. That way the people who receive the message will not see all of the other e-mail addresses. If you use the Bcc: line and leave the To: line blank, it will usually just say "Undisclosed recipients" on the To: line.
- Fix up the subject line too: Delete all those "FW:"s and "Fwd:"s, correct spelling, remove the ever-annoying ALL CAPS, or even change the subject if you wish.
- Delete the advertisements from the bottoms of the e-mails. Just because someone else allows free advertising in their e-mail doesn't mean you have to. Why give some unknown company free advertising?
- You know those messages where you have to keep opening a message inside of a message inside of a message to get to the actual message buried inside (and sometimes you find a bunch of copies of the same message in there)? That's because the message was repeatedly forwarded as an attachment, embedded another level deeper each time. Don't forward messages as attachments unless you absolutely must to preserve the formatting. Every e-mail program handles this differently, and some messages vary depending on how they're formatted. Experiment with your options to find the best way to do it using your program.

In Zimbra, after you click Forward, click on the Options button and choose "Format as HTML," then click Options again and choose "Include Original with Prefix" or "Include Original with Headers and Prefix." If neither of those work, you *can* use "Include Original as Attachment," but realize that it causes that embedding problem described above, so the recipients will have to go through an extra step to open it.

Do not forward

Almost any time a message says you should forward it, that's a sign that you shouldn't, but more specifically:

- Petitions that ask you to add your name and address and to forward it to 10 or 15 people or your entire address book. Don't do it! Not only will you annoy everyone you know, but you're wasting your time. E-mail petitions are worthless because they don't usually identify the signer by street address, and because they're not actually signed, they don't offer any proof that the "signer" is who they claim to be. However, a petition may be worth something to a spammer because of the nice long list of valid e-mail addresses it contains.
- Any message that say that it's being tracked and that something will happen as a result of forwarding it to a certain number of people (like money being donated to a charity). It is simply not possible.
- The ones that say something like, "Send this e-mail to 10 people and you'll see something great run across your screen" or "something really cute will happen." Nothing like that is ever going to happen, no matter how many people you send it to or how long you wait. Again, it is simply not possible.
- Obviously the ones that say you'll have bad luck if you *don't* forward them are stupid and pointless too.
- Almost every single "Amber Alert," "Virus Alert," or warning message you see is bogus. Most of them have been going around for years. If you really feel the need to forward them, check them out first. It's easy to find out if they're real or not – just go to <http://www.snopes.com> and look it up. If it's not, don't forward it!

If you really aren't sure if you should forward something, you can always ask the Help Desk.

Assistance and questions

If you have any questions or need more information, contact the Help Desk at (920) 403-HELP (4357) or helpdesk@snc.edu. The Help Desk is for St. Norbert College students and employees only.