Email Best Practices

Information Systems and Technology
Dawson College
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1   Use of Dawson email account

Do not use your Dawson email for purposes other than work. It is a good idea to have multiple email addresses for different purposes such as "friends" or "shopping on-line". You can get free email accounts from Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, etc. or from Internet providers such as Videotron. Most mail readers will let you integrate your different accounts under one reader.

It is expected you exhibit the same professional attitude using your Dawson email account as you would in your other aspects of your job. It is your responsibility to safeguard your account password. We recommend you change the default password that was assigned when your account was created.

2   Composing messages

- Include a short and meaningful subject (six words or less is ideal) that accurately represents the message's major content. Longer subject lines are OK but might be cut off by some email readers.
- Do not use attachments unnecessarily when plain text will do. For example a simple memo may be better sent as text within the email message than as an attachment. It is both quicker and easier for recipients to read the text in the email message than to open an attachment.
- Avoid large attachments, i.e. great than 10M. If your recipients have access to the shared drive, you might consider putting the file there instead.
- Identify yourself clearly; we recommend using a signature with your name, title and Dawson contact information.
- Don't assume privacy; you do not control what the recipient might do with your message, e.g. forward to another party.
- Keep HTML-format messages as simple as possible. The more gizmos you pack into an HTML message -- superfluous images, graphics, sound or video -- the more likely something won't work on your recipients' computers.
- Proofread and spell check.

3   Sending email

- Before you forward an email, make sure that all recipients need to receive the message. In addition, be careful when forwarding sensitive or confidential information.
- The carbon copy (CC) and blind carbon copy (BCC) allow you to send copies of an email to others you need to keep informed but who aren't necessarily the primary recipients. When copying others, be certain the email message pertains to them. Use the BCC feature sparingly. If

sensitive topics require BCCing others, it may be best to take the matter offline and discuss it in person.

- Respond Promptly. Generally speaking, you should respond to all professional email within a business day, even if it's just to say you've received the message and will look into the matter.

4 Managing your email

Regularly clean up your Deleted and Sent folders, as these take up space on the server. If you want to keep those messages, move them to other folders. To further save space, save attachments to your hard drive and then delete the email message containing the attachment.

Use folders to organize your emails once you've processed them, and categories and flags to identify emails that require further attention.

5 Spam prevention

Spam are unsolicited, usually mass-produced messages. We filter these messages and also block the viruses from email attachments. If you have received spam or a suspicious file that was not picked up by the spam filters or an email message that was wrongly tagged as spam we encourage you to email it to spam@dawsoncollege.qc.ca ; we analyze and tailor the filtering rules on a daily basis.

We do not block messages from registered lists. For example if you signed up to *Expedia* with your Dawson email, you might receive travel-related newsletters. These usually provide you with instructions to opt out of the distribution.

Here are some other tips to help reduce spam:

- Do not use your Dawson email for purposes other than work.
- Do not reply to spam or click any links in the message: replying to be removed from the list only confirms that you are a valid recipient and could make you a target for future spamming.
- Do not provide your email address to be posted on Web sites, newsgroup lists or other online public forums: these are easily harvested by spammers.
- Do not forward chain e-mail messages: you lose control over who sees your email address.

6 Phishing prevention

Phishing scams are designed to steal consumers' personal information such as credit card number or passwords. These scams are getting sophisticated and can forge a company's identity, e.g. addressing you as the "Dawson IT Team" or offer you a web link to an official looking, but fake, website, asking you for example to verify financial information. Never divulge any personal or financial information by email. Dawson will never ask you for such personal information in an email. Furthermore, our emails are always signed personally.

Related documents

Further information and instructions can be found in the following documents, available on Docushare:

- [Dawson College Barracuda Spam Firewall User's Guide](#).

- [Email User Guide (instructions for Exchange/Outlook)](#)