FCC
Computer Security
Notice

F C C   E - M A I L   N E T I Q U E T T E

Electronic mail (e-mail) has become a very popular business communication tool. It is fast and convenient.

In addition to normal business functions FCC personnel are allowed to make incidental personal use of e-mail. With that in mind there are two main areas of concern for usage-*content and file size*.

"All information in [your] system is subject to access by authorized FCC personnel an any time. Individual users have no privacy rights in such information." Recognize those words? They are the first thing that we see and must acknowledge when logging in to the FCC network every morning.

No: the FCC does not have the time, interest or the manpower to sit and peruse through your e-mail. However, certain behavior can cause disruptions and delay. Appropriate action will be taken when FCC policy is violated and/or a misuse of e-mail occurs.

Always assume that the Internet is not secure. FCC users are not permitted to use the e-mail system to send highly sensitive or restrictive FCC information over the Internet. There is a risk of the information being intercepted.

For that same reason you are to never forward your FCC e-mail to your private email addresses. Such a breach will be taken very seriously. The information contained may influence the FCC mission in a negative way.

As mentioned before: content can also be an issue. FCC Instruction 1479.2 expressly prohibits FCC computers from generating harassing or slurring messages, or similar graphic images.

The creation, copying, transmission or retransmission or forwarding of chain letters, jokes or other unauthorized mass mailing is prohibited, regardless of the subject matter.

Further, the FCC e-mail system is not to be used to promote for-profit endeavors. "Employees may not use official time or the agency's computer or e-mail systems to promote a business or otherwise sell or buy products," according to the FCC Standards of Ethical Conduct.

The second critical factor in e-mail use is file size. The overall goal is to reduce congestion. When miscellaneous traffic is kept to a minimum critical data can get through to users. For example, sending and storage of .avi (Audio/Visual Interleaved) files, which are typically used to store video playback and movies, is not permitted. Such files slow down FCC traffic considerably due to their size.

In the same vein, e-mail that is sent to the 'Everyone' public group goes out to 2500 FCC contractors and employees nationwide. It creates an undue burden on the FCC network. Keep your distribution lists as short as possible.

The FCC Bulletin Board System (BBS) has been reserved to post lost and found items, birth/retirement/death notices and post items for sale.

Finally, when setting up your vacation rules makes sure that you have set them up to only reply to the sender. It is extremely taxing on the FCC system to have e-mails bouncing back to every e-mail recipient in the Commission that simply states that you are on vacation to every single "everyone" message sent. The FCC Resource Center has instructions on how to set up your vacation reply rules properly in GroupWise.

As long as you are aware of what you are sending and are reasonable with the file size and content, you will be displaying proper FCC E-mail Netiquette. "When in doubt, take the safest route."
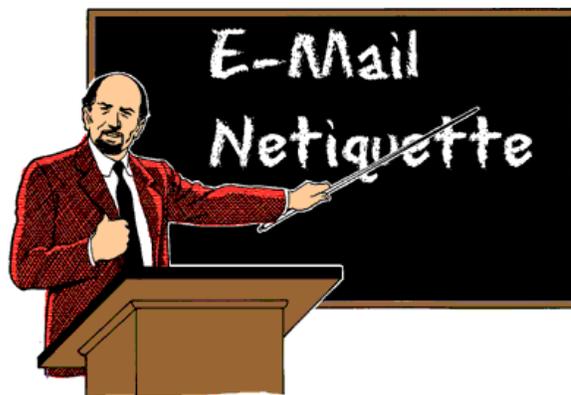
COMPUTER SECURITY TIP OF THE MONTH:
THE MAY 2002 COMPUTER SECURITY NOTICE DISCUSSED E-MAIL SPAM. UNFORTUNATELY EMAIL SPAM IS STILL A PROBLEM FOR SOME ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE FCC. YOUR BEST DEFENSE AGAINST SUCH A NUISANCE IS NOT TO RESPOND TO THE REQUEST BUT SIMPLY DELETE THE MESSAGE.

VISIT THE COMPUTER SECURITY INTRANET SITE (LINK PROVIDED BELOW) FOR VALUABLE INFORMATION ON THE FCC COMPUTER SECURITY PROGRAM!