

Proper and Safe E-mail Protocol

By Roy Coleman

When sending messages:

Although much of the e-mail that we receive is of interest, many of the senders **endanger both** our e-mail system **and** the e-mail and computer of everyone else that receives the message.

Including a large number of recipients in the **TO:** or **CC:** section of an e-mail endangers **ALL** of their computers. Should **ANY ONE** of them get infected with one of the common e-mail viruses or should **ANY ONE** of them inadvertently open an infected e-mail it could (and many do) pick up **ALL** of the addresses in a person's in box and transmit the infection to **ALL** of the people. (See below.)

If you want to send an e-mail to a large number of people, put YOUR e-mail address in the **TO:** box and include everyone else in the **BCC:** box. That will insure two things: 1) none of the recipients' names are available to any of the other recipients or a virus and 2) you will get back a confirmation that the mail was successfully sent.

Also, if you are forwarding a message, remove any and all of the e-mail address(es) from the original sender.

When receiving or opening messages:

Should you receive a message from a friend or acquaintance that has either a somewhat cryptic subject (maybe similar to 'this is interesting' or 'I hope you like this') or no subject at all, be very careful. If you look at the message and it is only one line (maybe a repeat of the subject) with a link to another site or a picture, **DO NOT CLICK THE LINK.** Many of the targets of these links contain software that will do at least one if not both of the following things: 1) copy the contents of your computer to a third party site so they can look for confidential information or 2) resend the message to everyone in your address book, thereby infecting all of those computers. Many cases of identity theft can be traced to this type of worm or virus.

If you think that the e-mail may be legitimate, e-mail the sender and ask if it was really from them and also ask for a description of the contents of the link.

Remember: E-mail safety and security is **EVERYONE's** responsibility.