Dublin City University

Guidelines on the Use of Email/Messaging facilities or the Internet

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance regarding the usage of email/electronic messaging or the Internet which will ensure efficient communications, project a good image of the University and reduce the risk of legal issues.

Security of such resources cannot be guaranteed.   Care must be taken in composing messages or posting content on the Internet as they could subsequently for example be the basis for a legal agreement between parties or could be deemed to be defamatory or detrimental to an individual or organisation.

It is important also to note that e-mail messages, like other documents, and content posted on the Internet might be subject to disclosure/challenge under the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information legislation or in the event of legal proceedings.

NB: The use of all University's Computing Resources is subject to the University's Code of Conduct for the Use of Computer Resources and the University's ICT Policies and Procedures, all of which can be found at: http://www4.dcu.ie/iss/policies/index.shtml.

1.   General Principles for the use of E-Mail/ Messaging and Internet Facilities

- E-mail/Messaging and Internet facilities are provided to Staff and Students to support the normal activities of the University, in particular for educational, research and administrative purposes.

- Incidental personal use is permissible provided it does not consume more than a trivial amount of resources, does not interfere with productivity, is not for private business activities and does not involve any illegal or unethical activities.

- Each user is responsible for the content and use of their own account. Passwords should not be shared with others. See the University's Password Policy for more information.

- All outgoing email from DCU must include the following disclaimer:

  "*This e-mail and any files transmitted with it are confidential and are intended solely for use by the addressee. Any unauthorised dissemination, distribution or copying of this message and any attachments is strictly prohibited. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender and delete the message. Any views or opinions presented in this e-mail may solely be the views of the author and cannot be relied upon as being those of Dublin City University. E-mail communications such as this cannot be guaranteed to be virus-free, timely, secure or error-free and Dublin City University does not accept liability for any such matters or their consequences. Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.*"

- E-mail "lists" (e.g. allstaff, dcustaff, classlists… etc - there are c. 200 such lists available) should be used for genuine University business only. They should be used sparingly and

only when absolutely necessary - thus avoiding irritating people with unsolicited and unwanted e-mail and avoiding clogging up the network. They should not be used as a forum for political debate or for the promotion of ideological and/or religious beliefs.

- The e-mail facilities should not be used for "classified advertisements"(e.g. accommodation wanted, articles for sale etc). Other complementary services are available to accommodate these requirements including: Bulletin Boards, Special Topic E-mail Lists and News Groups. (Further information on these facilities is available from the ISS home page under the respective Staff Services and Student Services tabs.)

- The general use e-mail "lists" (e.g. allstaff, dcustaff, etc) should not be used as a forum for debating particular issues. Other complementary services are available to accommodate these requirements including: Bulletin Boards, Special Topic E-mail Lists and News Groups. (Further information on these facilities is available from the ISS home page under the respective Staff Services and Student Services tabs.)

- Users of the facilities should not use email and should exercise extreme caution when using Internet facilities to transmit confidential or sensitive information. Whereas the University will do its utmost to ensure privacy, confidentiality cannot be Users of the facilities should be aware of the possibilities that electronic communications might be intercepted, copied, forwarded, printed or stored by others. Particular care should be taken with the transmission of Credit Card details.

- Each user is responsible for the content and use of their own account. Passwords should not be shared with others and should be maintained in accordance with the University's Password Policy.

- Access to the Internet is provided via a proxy server. Direct access to the Internet may be required in exceptional circumstances - in these situations, applications for direct access should be submitted to The Director of Information Systems & Services for approval.

- Users of the facilities must exercise extreme caution to ensure that there is no breach of copyright or of other intellectual property rights, and the use of the facilities conforms to all relevant policies and procedures including, but not limited to ICT and respect and dignity in the University.

- Where there is a genuine need to access web sites that would normally be considered to be inappropriate, for example for particular genuine research, teaching or learning activities, the authorisation of the Head of School and Executive Dean, or Head of Unit, is required and the Director of Information Systems & Services is to be informed

- The University cannot guarantee users of the computer facilities that they will be protected from the receipt of material that may be offensive to them.

- Users accessing Email using a mobile device must ensure that the appropriate security settings have been configured on the device. Use of mobile devices is covered by the Mobile Computing Policy.

- Use of the facilities is also subject to HEAnet Acceptable Usage Policy (See http://www.heanet.ie/about/aup).

- Access to E-mail records might be requested under Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.

- Commitments entered into using e-mail may be contractually binding.

- It is prohibited to send or forward e-mails/messages or post content which may be offensive or disruptive., This includes, but is not limited to, defamatory, harassing, offensive, racist, obscene or threatening remarks. If you receive an content of this nature, you should inform one of the following as appropriate: your Head of School/Unit, your

lecturer, Director of Information Systems & Services, Director of Human Resources or the University Chief Operations Officer.

2. It is Prohibited To

- Access, create, display, copy or transfer web pages or other material accessible across the Internet that is illegal, offensive, harassing, defamatory, obscene, racist, sexist or threatening, or in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights..

- Exchange proprietary information, trade secrets or any other privileged, confidential or sensitive information

- Create, copy or transfer unauthorised advertisements, solicitations or viruses

- Play games on computing facilities available for general access except where required formally as part of research work, course work, DCU sponsored events or other DCU approved activity

- Use the facilities for betting and gambling type purposes

- Copy a trademark or logo belonging to another party

- Publish material which is an incitement to commit crime or an instruction on how to carry out illegal activities

- Use the facilities to promote personal political, ideological and/or religious beliefs

- Use the University's name or logo to imply the endorsement by the University of other organisations' products or services without written permission from the President's Office.

3. Recommended Good Practice for E-mail Messaging and Internet Usage

- Be concise and to the point in your emails.

- Use a meaningful Subject in the Header.

- Use good structure and layout in emails, messages and web content.

- Do not use e-mail to discuss confidential information.

- Avoid sending unnecessary attachments with emails.

- Spell check all e-mails prior to transmission and all content prior to posting.

- Re-read the e-mail before you send it, and the content before you post it.

- Answer emails swiftly and only use "Reply All" when really necessary.

- Never reply to spam or junk e-mails nor click on hyperlinks embedded in them - you are merely confirming your existence to the spammers.

- Only request "delivery and read receipts" for emails when certification is essential.

- When replying to mail received as a member of a mailing list, take care to note whether your reply is to the individual sending the message or to the whole list. A careless reply to the whole list when an individual response is intended, or more appropriate, can be very annoying and time wasting to other list members. A busy mailing list can generate huge amounts of data in a short space of time, and it is particularly important for users to

unsubscribe from such lists whenever they are not in regular touch with networking facilities.

- Set your Homepage to an appropriate URL for fast access. Many people on campus use the DCU Website(www.dcu.ie) as their Homepage.

- Use the Bookmarks facility to store the URLs for sites of special interest to you

- Only print web pages when really necessary. Think GREEN.

- If you want to refer to, or include material from another web page in your own work - create a link pointing to the material rather than copying it

- Material downloaded from the Internet must be scanned with virus detection software before installation or execution

- When using information from an Internet site for important decision type purposes - verify the integrity of the data. The fact that the information is there does not mean that it is correct. Many sites do not get updated regularly

- Exercise caution if entering into on-line purchasing arrangements. Such transactions usually involve the use of credit cards or charge cards. Such transactions should only be entered into with reputable organisations that have appropriate security arrangements in place

- Further information on e-mail usage for staff and students is available at: http://www4.dcu.ie/iss/dcuapps/index.shtml

4. Scope of Guidelines and Regulations for E-Mail/Electronic Messaging and Internet Usage

The scope of these guidelines and regulations includes but is not limited to:

- E-mails generated using any e-mail systems, e-mail client software and webmail connected to or via the DCU network(including the networks of linked colleges).

- E-mail generated with "from addresses" of dcu.ie, regardless of where they originated.

- Other messaging systems including but not limited to: news, chat, instant messaging, VLE message boards etc.

- Students and Staff of DCU and linked colleges using the above facilities.

- Use of Internet Facilities while on the DCU campus - whether or not such facilities are provided by DCU.

- Students and Staff of DCU and linked colleges using the above facilities.