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ACCEPTABLE USE OF EMAIL

Introduction

The Australian Cartoonists' Association recognises the need for email to assist in the efficient and professional delivery of services to its Membership and stakeholders.

Purpose

This policy sets out guidelines for acceptable use of email. The primary purpose is required to assist the board in carrying out their duties.

Authorisation

Secretary
Australian Cartoonists' Association

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Policy

This policy is designed to assist board members when determining what is acceptable behaviour utilising email to communicate.

Procedures

Electronic mail (email) is today's preferred medium for communication. Email can result in fast and effective communication but sometimes it produces instead:

- misunderstanding
- offence
- irritation or anger

This Guide suggests ways of avoiding these.

SENDING EMAIL

Email is a non-interactive communication	In speaking face to face or by telephone, you have immediate feedback if your message is misunderstood or is producing an unexpected response. Email does not offer these aids, so take more care when using it.
One topic per message	If you wish to deal with two unrelated issues, send two emails. Keep your subject line meaningful and short – this is all that your correspondent sees in their incoming mail summary before they decide whether to read (or delete) your message.
Is your message confidential?	If it is, say so clearly at the start. When working at great speed, your intended reader may forward your email to others without noticing its sensitive content.
Include an appropriate signature	Your email signature should contain at least your name, email address and telephone number. If you send your message to a distribution list, your own email address may not appear in the email's FROM field.

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WRITING STYLE AND APPEARANCE

Communicate without risk	Be cautious with jokes and robust comments, unless you know your reader well. Maybe they are having a 'difficult morning' when your message arrives and find your humour flat or even offensive.
Help readability	Use paragraphs in your email. The white space above and below a paragraph gives a visual cue to your reader. Huge slabs of solid text are daunting and obscure the structure of your ideas.

RECEIVING EMAIL

Forwarding a message to someone else	When someone sends you email, are they giving you permission to publish it? In a sensitive situation, do not forward an email message unless the sender has explicitly said you may do so. Often a message includes an automatic disclaimer to indicate that the content is for your eyes only, as the direct recipient.
Preserve the thread	Most email software includes any previous dialogue in your reply to a message. This gives the historical 'thread' and is helpful to your reader. You should leave this feature switched on unless your discussion has a very long tail.
Avoid replying to the World	Consider whether the CC recipients in the message need to be included when you reply. Do not automatically select your email software's REPLY TO ALL option.

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PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Email is not a secure medium	Plain email is not a safe way to transmit a confidential document. Many criminal 'scams' rely on sending email that does not originate from the sender named in its FROM field. Sometimes confirmation by telephone may be appropriate.
Asking for a receipt	<p>You can ask for an email receipt, so that when your recipient opens your message, their email software automatically sends you a message to confirm this.</p> <p>But this can produce a strong reaction from your correspondent who may see it as an intrusion of privacy, patronizing or arrogant. Many people set up their email clients to ignore their receipts.</p> <p>If you really need confirmation that they have read your email, consider a follow up phone call.</p>
Beware BCC	BCC (blind carbon copy) allows you to send a copy of an email to an additional group of people, without your main recipient knowing about it. But does it? Some email software treats BCC just like CC and your cover is blown! Any you may question if this is unethical.

Unacceptable use

Board members may not use email to:

- Create or exchange messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene or threatening
- Exchange any confidential or sensitive information held by [name of organisation] (unless in the authorised course of their duties)

Related Documents

Email Maintenance and Archiving Procedures