

Email address change notification tips

email address transition tactics

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Overview: Many users will not take action on email address change notices. Making the notices as effective as possible maximizes lost correspondents.

New Address selection: SPAM resistance and privacy are enhanced by proper selection of your new address. See tips elsewhere on this site regarding 'SPAM Avoidance and Mitigation'.

Recipient lists: Many users have SPAM filters set to reject mail with multiple addressees in the TO and CC fields. For this reason, plus reasons of privacy, politeness, and other factors, one should always use BCC (not TO or CC) for mail addresses to many recipients. See tips elsewhere on this site regarding 'SPAM Avoidance and Mitigation'.

Category notifications? Address transition is a good time to consider just who should know about your new address(es). It is an opportunity to separate correspondents into categories, using a different address for each group. In this way, SPAM from one type of correspondent (say, e-commerce webforms) does not pollute the others. You can monitor only certain of your addresses when on vacation. Examples:

NewAddrBiz@Domain.com

NewAddrPers@Domain.com

NewAddrWebform@Domain.com

SUBJECT line: A carefully crafted SUBJECT line is essential to grab recipient attention; you are competing with lots of SPAM for recipient inboxes. You get 64 characters to attract them to pay attention to your message. Use them wisely. Make them non-generic to distinguish from SPAM. (See footnote [1]) Here is an example:

SUBJECT: NewAddr@Domain.com replaces OldAddr@Domain.com YYYY-MM-DD

Body of message: Repeat SUBJECT information in the body of the email message. Add a few friendly lines of text (not hyperlinks) to convince SPAM filters to pass your message to the intended human recipient.

Attached file caveats (.vcf): Many users will not open email with files attached. Many users will not open attached files. Attaching files containing even harmless contact information (such as .vcf files) will scare some recipients.

Send from new address: Many people have email apps set to import addresses into address books from every message received. Many of these people do not or will not make entries into an address book by any other means (such as with their own fingers) So the notice

SUBJECT: NewAddr@Domain.com replaces OldAddr@Domain.com YYYY-MM-DD
needs to be also sent from the new address.

Send from old address: Many people have SPAM filters set to accept mail from only those with familiar addresses. So the notice

SUBJECT: NewAddr@Domain.com replaces OldAddr@Domain.com YYYY-MM-DD
should also be sent from the becoming-obsolete old address.

Repetition benefits: Many people keep no address book at all - in particular those who use webmail clients (hotmail, gmail, yahoo mail, etc), as distinct from workstation-based email applications (such as Outlook, Eudora, etc). These users seem only to reply to a previous message (re: a SUBJECT line you sent them, even if it unrelated to their current topic). For these users, repetition can be helpful. Sending multiple copies of your message

SUBJECT: NewAddr@Domain.com replaces OldAddr@Domain.com YYYY-MM-DD
over many days may help get their attention. Many of this type of user will not pick up the change unless notified via some other non-email method.

Overlapped or Blended Transitions: Many users just won't pick up the change, no matter how one notifies them. Focusing attention on stragglers is one method of getting their attention. Plan to accomplish a 'blended transition', also known as 'overlapped transition'. These are distinct from a 'cutover'. 'Overlapped transition' is one where the old address continues to be monitored for a period of weeks, months, or years. Mail in the old inbox is occasionally inspected to catch stragglers. This type of transition is also useful to collect correspondents that you forgot to notify of your address change.

Advance notification via footers: Notifying correspondents in advance via footers or signature blocks appended to the bottom of email is largely ineffective, because so many users don't look at them. (They may have concluded that everything at the bottom of messages is extraneous, and/or advertisements). An additional risk is that some correspondents you don't want to learn about the new address may inadvertently receive a notification.

Notification via auto reply: Using 'auto reply', or 'vacation reply' is rarely a good idea for any purpose. 'Auto reply' validates SPAM targets, so the abusing senders simply focus their efforts on your address. 'Auto reply' broadcasts useless posts to listserves you may be subscribed to, irritating subscribers.

Recipient unknown: Correspondents may or may not receive a 'recipient unknown' reply when they send to an abandoned address. This is an unreliable method of deciding whether or not a message had been delivered.

We are ready to assist you in planning and implementing email communications. For all your computer needs, contact us: 4ReliableComputers.Net

[1] YYYY-MM-DD is the date expressed in universal format, where Y=Year, M=Month as number, DD=day of month, and leading zeroes are included. Examples: 2014-01-28, 2014-12-01)