



TechNumisOlogy

The times they are a changing; I often get email from other numismatist such as club officers announcing a coin show or newsletter and just as often I get the email addresses of hundreds of fellow coin enthusiast. Why? Well part is lack of knowledge, and part is lack of the normal social feedback that we as humans have developed over eons to understand, body language etc.

Now I can hear you saying “what the heck is he talking about?”, well email is a form of communication, and a fantastic form of communication at that, it is also a very new form of communication which means we as humans have not worked out all the bugs or fully developed social norms. It also means we need to be conscious of the impact of our words, emotion is implied in a face to face conversation but the very same words could come off as rude or even offensive without the benefit of body language. Then there is the social standards, in a group of men smoking and drinking the off color joke may be acceptable, but in a room full of “mature” ladies whom form the church welfare group an off color joke is without a doubt off limits, email is often directed to all of the above audiences and then some.

Wow sounds complicated, well really it’s not, it just takes some good old fashioned common sense applied to email. Let’s go back to the addresses often attached to those emails. We would never just give out a home address or phone number to anyone who ask for it, we would ask the person inquiring for their contact information and give it to the third party and let them decide if they wish to offer up their information, so why then are these same standards not applied to email, the answer is often lack of knowledge and that email is such a new way to communicate we are still developing social norms for it.

That is the point of this article, as TNA’s Technology Chair, and 2nd VP I felt compelled to write this article to offer that knowledge, so TNA members and TNA News readers will know how to respect and handle the information of their fellow numismatist. Hopefully after reading this you will be able to construct effective communication, learn how to protect the rights and privacy of others and expand everyone’s enjoyment of numismatics.

We will start with the very basics, if you want your email to even have a chance of being read keep the graphics to a minimum, the most secure email is text and many corporations force all email to text so those pretty pictures and fancy fonts turn into what looks like hieroglyphics, so text is better than html.

The subject line is vital! To get your email reader’s attention, to get past spam filters you need a GOOD subject line.

Here is an example of a bad subject line... Subject: Coin Show

Here is a good subject line... Subject: Corpus Christi Coin Club Announcement: President Smolik Invites you to attend the 79th Coin Show held in Corpus Christi

OK why the long winded subject line you are asking, and I also hear some of you saying it is not that important, and nothing could be further from the truth. I teach classes on internet security at our community college, I have been in the computer field for almost 30 years and I do not open my email unless I intend to read it, anyone can say Hi here is the invoice, but only one person can say here is a copy of the Invoice for the table rental at the last "club name" coin show "date". The reason I am so selective in what I open is security, if you can see the email then it saw you and it is too late, any bad intentions (virus, identity theft, Trojans, worms so on) have been done. So I only see the subject line of any email I get, and I have gotten upwards of 11,000 emails in any one given day. I only open the emails whose subject lines look legitimate. I can hear you now, well Dave knows who I am, news flash I bet all of you at one time or the other have gotten email addressed from you, to you, that you did not send, it is just one more trick the bad guys use.

Next setup your email program correctly, this process differs from program to program, I use Outlook and SBC Yahoo, but if you have EarthLink or AOL the steps for proper setup are different. Specifically what I am referring to in proper setup is your name, while coinstud34@aol may make perfect logic to you I have no clue who that is and if it is a valid person or a trap. Use a plain name I often use from the system of the Chief Nerd or from the system of David Kerr Burke as opposed to my_initials_and-or_number@sbc.yahoo.com (note a fake email address) but that should illustrate the point.

Now about those addresses, when you construct your email somewhere you will find a TO: CC: and BCC: address field (CC stands for Carbon Copy and BCC stands for Blind Carbon Copy). DO NOT SHARE email addresses by using the TO: or even the CC: field for all those members whom you wish to inform about the next coin club meeting, it is a security risk, rude, and you are giving them up to spammers, crooks even the Russian Mafia etc. Place all those members email addresses in the BCC field, that way no one will ever see them, find out how from your ISP tech support or on the internet.

Important note; do not leave the TO: field blank some programs will not accept an email with no addresses, place YOUR own or CLUB email address here, I suggest an email address that folks can reply to or a throw away email from a provider like Gmail, (they are FREE) as this is the only address everyone on EARTH will see. Did you notice the "everyone on earth" part, because every single email goes through hundreds of computers located around the world via the fastest path or path of least resistance, even if you are only sending an email across the street, so your meeting announcement may be seen on systems in China, England, New York or any place that has a mail server setup on the internet and at present that number is in the hundreds of millions and growing.

Now finally the message itself, keep in mind the rules for correspondence (read business letters) we were taught in grade school, remember the tone, at times place a (grin) or (only joking) in your email to let the reader know the tone, this ☺ is called an emoticon and has developed to replace body language and is perfectly fine to include in casual messages. News releases and

announcements should be kept business like. If you are sending a newsletter or photo keep in mind that often there is a 2 megabyte limit for email file attachments, reduce that picture to less than 100 dpi (with a FREE program like Picasa) and use .jpg it will have more of a chance of reaching the people you intended to send it to. Warn people if you are sending a larger file, say a 5 megabyte newsletter, send a separate email first announcing that there is another one right behind it with a 5 Meg PDF club newsletter attachment. This informs your members that you are sending them a newsletter, and allows those who have smaller size limits to be in the know, they otherwise may feel like they are being left off the list because they never get your emails and have no clue as to why; it also lets those who have dial up internet access know why that email is taking 2 hours to download. I suggest you locate those members on dial up and offer them the ability to view the newsletter or announcement online or better yet create a smaller version for them; no one likes being left out.

Important note, PDF, JPG are common formats, not everyone has Microsoft Bob's Letter Writer that came with your 1995 era machine, and they will not be able to read your show report, there are options (for FREE) on the internet such as **OpenOffice.org** or **Google Pack with StarOffice** which can be downloaded at <http://pack.google.com/> likewise use the save as command not the default save and name those files something that can be easily recognized such as "Club Name (City) Show report for 2006.doc" a year from now when I want to know what we did at the July 2006 meeting I may have trouble finding that information in the file named ccmeet0706a.doc

Lastly it is ok to pass on items that you feel may be important but take some time and verify them first, remember the boy who cried wolf, if your email often contains fake warnings, wrong information then it will get deleted before it ever gets read, I have a close family member who sends me every email urban legend, every joke, I am at the point where all his email (several per day) go without reading directly into the trash "sorry Uncle Marvin".

This should be a good start at proper numismatic email procedures and protocol, if you have questions about this article email me at tna@ccatech.com with the subject line "TNA News Article Sept & Oct Issue: Place Your Topic here", without the quotes I will respond.