Columbia College
Email and Online Best Practices

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to guide staff at Columbia College and help enhance our ability to present ourselves in a professional manner internally and externally in a digital world. The below is a list of best practices

1. Utilizing "Reply All" or Sending Email to Groups
   Please avoid using "Reply All". The only exception to this is if participants are using a distribution list (e.g. 1reception) or having a group discussion where everyone MUST see all responses. "Reply All" ties up storage resources and people unnecessarily. A sender may choose to put the email group in the "**Bcc"** (Blind carbon copy) field rather than the "**To"** field as it will prevent people from replying to all.

2. Email Addresses
   Please double check to whom you are sending your email to. It can be very easy to send an email to the wrong person, especially when names are similar. Using an incorrect email address could mean a colleague/co-worker has received confidential information that they should not be privy to.

3. Attachments
   When sending attachments, please ensure the correct file is attached prior to sending the email. To safeguard this from accidentally happening, consider adding the receiver's email address last once everything has been checked.

4. Forwarding
   Be especially careful when forwarding emails to others. If someone has shared something with you via email, they may not have written it in a way that is intended to be shared. If you would like to forward it, please request their permission first.

5. Private/Secure Information
   There is information that should be considered private and/or confidential and should not be sent through email. This would include Social Insurance Numbers and usernames and passwords should never be sent in the same email.

6. An Email is a Reflection of You and the College
   Spelling, contractions, misuse of punctuation, abbreviations – for example – brb or lol), clear subject lines, and case sensitivity are all important. Misusing them detracts from professionalism. Internal emails should not be shared with students or external stakeholders.

7. Social Media
   Please be mindful that social media is never private and will never be deleted. Do not post anything that you do not want to have your professional associates to see. This would include talking poorly about your current role, organization, co-workers, or supervisor.

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8. Signatures
   Signatures are used to provide the information needed for the receiver to identify the sender. It should include your name, your position, the college logo, and then contact information (phone number, fax number, and website address). The font in your signature should not be bigger than the email text. Generally, unless an individual has credentials in more than one discipline, only the most recent credential of the individual needs to be listed.

9. Emoticons (e.g. ☺ :)   )
   In professional emails or correspondence, the use of emoticons should always be avoided.