# THE PERILS OF COPIOUSLY FORWARDING EMAIL AND SENDING BULK ADDRESSED EMAILINGS

*(Those who send mass emailings or forwarded email probably needs to read this.)*

## PREFACE

First, I assure you, this document is not in response to the poor email practices of any one individual. It is a general response to a daily problem that is being spread by increasing numbers of people. For the most part, I am convinced that many who use the poor email practice addressed below truly do not realize their error and the ramifications for their actions. Hence, this document.

I had previously posted a document about this matter on the web earlier in 2000. It was entitled, "Recommended Rules of Conduct for Sending Mass or Bulk Email Messages." This document supersedes and replaces that one.

I believe there are others who share my sentiments about this problem, and perhaps this document will serve as a way to help them cope. I also hope it will serve as instruction to those who need to be better informed on the proper ways to engage in email correspondences.

## THE DILEMMA

Email addresses are in many ways like written addresses or telephone numbers to one's home. They are links to each individual's inner circle of personal contact and communication.

Most dread getting calls from telemarketers. The same is true about getting unsolicited mail from unknown people and organizations. Such mail often asks for something, promotes a product, promotes a person or service, etc. People have the same negative feelings toward unsolicited email.

I personally do not like to receive ANY unsolicited 'BULK' emails or 'FORWARDED' emails. I also refuse to forward them on, even when requested to do so. I do not mind receiving such that contain urgent prayer requests and prayer letters of people I know and I have asked to be placed on their mailing list. But almost everything else is now dumped in my trash can and never read.

Why? Simply put, I do not have the time. Though such email may be informative, entertaining, humorous, and even inspirational at times to some people; like many I do not have time to wade through and filter the stuff. I do not even like to waste the time to read the headings of scores and scores of forwarded messages that I receive weekly.

Just think, how would you like for people to keep interrupting you by knocking on your door and handing you pamphlets or papers, or even leaving them on your doorstep? Some may even venture to tell you that you should look through the material because you "may get something out of it." Adding insult to injury, what if they charged you a few

pennies for the privilege of giving them to you, like Jehovah's Witnesses often try to leave you with *their* pamphlets—for a few cents? I assure you, the correlation is accurate for at least some that use the Internet.

For instance, some missionaries in third world countries do not have ISPs (Internet Service Providers) that provide unlimited connect time at *any* price. As of the date of compiling this document the ISP in Grenada does not offer unlimited Internet service. Thus, we literally pay for each second we are connected. At times our Internet connection runs painfully slow due to network congestion which is caused by narrow bandwidth, which in turn is caused by the telephone company's microwave link between Carriacou and the mainland of Grenada. Thus, even downloading short but numerous email messages can take several minutes that quickly add up during the month.

We pay about $30.00 (US$) for 30 hours of connect time each month. We also pay about $1.00 (US$) for each additional hour over that limit. With the development and maintenance of our website, Last Chance Ministries (LCM), we are trying to cut down our connect time where ever possible.

We copiously use the Internet to communicate with individuals and organizations that are stateside. We even use it to video conference (when the bandwidth permits) with our daughter, Tabitha, who is working in West Virginia. Of course we send and receive email with more and more friends all over the world. I am also beginning to get more correspondence (and even some phone calls!) from people who have discovered LCM. We cannot cut down in those areas; thus, I am striving to cut down on incoming email that is useless to us.

The negative feelings toward receiving bulk and forwarded email only intensifies when I see my email address and the address of others readily viewable at the top or in the embedded text of the message. Read on to see why.

### MAKING A BAD PRACTICE EVEN WORSE

More and more junk email includes advertisements for very objective material—including explicit and immoral adult material and services. As believers most of us would never ask to receive such emails, but unscrupulous people manage to 'somehow' get addresses such as ours. That 'somehow' is often forwarded and re-forwarded email and improperly addressed bulk emails. Hence the central theme of this document.

Those that forward email or send bulk emailings with openly attached email addresses cannot know with certainty that those addresses will not eventually wind up on the computer of someone whose values and interests vastly differ from ours. This should be of particular interest to those of us who believe that Biblical believers are called to a life of separation from the dirt of the world.

**As ugly as it may seem, many well meaning believers may actually be making it possible for purveyors of pornography to send advertisements to some of their friends or others they do not even know personally!** That is how serious the problem is.

Once an email address gets on an undesirable mailing list it is often very difficult or even impossible to get it removed. Sometimes the only remedy is to close that email account and open another one. That is usually very, very time consuming and a down right drag ("a drag?" Am I dating my self?). Moreover, some vital Internet services allow you to set up personal accounts that are linked back to your email address. If you forget your password (as

many of us often do) then you can ask the service to email the password to you—via your established email account. This is especially important to webmasters. This makes closing a needed and established email account very difficult. Even when one takes that drastic step, any new email address will remain private only until someone else makes it available on the web by forwarding it or including it in bulk addressed emails that make all addresses available. Then the relentless cycle begins all over again.

Please bare in mind, this document is not meant to discourage any from engaging in personal correspondence. I personally enjoy and strive to respond to all personal emails. I also welcome and pray for any forwarded prayer requests. But, before you forward even those please read on to learn the proper way to do it.

## HOW NOT TO DO IT *IF* YOU MUST

Under NO circumstances forward or initiate personally composed bulk email messages by simply selecting all your desired recipients from your address book and putting them in the 'To' or 'Cc' (Carbon copy) address sections of your emails!

I cannot emphasize this enough. **When you put all the email addresses in the 'To' or 'Cc' address areas you are in effect making all email addresses available to others who can use them as they like!** Believe it or not, there are some companies that will actually pay people or provide free services for each email address you provide for them. For example, I know of a free online storage service that will provide five megabytes extra for each email address you give them.

Many such companies want the addresses merely so they can send people an advertisement for their services. But some companies may even go on to sell those email addresses to **mailing list companies** that will in turn sell those addresses to almost anyone that offers almost any services and products available.

How would you feel if you suddenly began receiving tons of undesirable mail at the post office or in the mailbox attached to your home because a 'friend' provided your address to various mailing services? That is what can—and often does—occur when you make the email addresses of others available in ways that almost anyone can use.

## HOW TO DO IT *IF* YOU MUST

There are proper ways to forward email when absolutely necessary, such as prayer requests. This is my recommendation on how to do it—*If* you truly have the need to do so.

If you feel you really need to forward email or send out bulk email messages, then put the addresses of all intended recipients in the 'Bcc' (Blind carbon copy) address section of your email message during composition. Some email composers will allow you to use the "Recipient List Suppressed" option instead. **Using 'Bcc' or "Recipient List Suppressed" will forward or send your bulk addressed email message to all you desire, but it will only provide the email address of the individual who receives it.**

NOTE: **IF YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW TO DO THIS YOU SHOULD REFRAIN FROM POSTING EMAILS TO MULTIPLE RECIPIENTS UNTIL YOU LEARN HOW. ALSO, IF YOUR EMAIL COMPOSER DOES NOT HAVE THIS**

**ABILITY, THEN GET ANOTHER ONE AND LEARN TO USE IT—*BEFORE* YOU SEND OUT ANY MORE BULK ADDRESS EMAILINGS.**

### A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT FORWARDING EMAIL

Often times email addresses are embedded in the original bulk addressed email that has been forwarded on by others. Make sure that you delete all email addresses in every nestled level of the previously forwarded message BEFORE you forward it own to others by using the 'Bcc' mode.
   **Again, if you currently do not how to do so, do not do it until you can.**

### A MATTER OF CONSIDERATION

Simply out of personal consideration and respect for others, you should first ask each individual if they want to receive forwarded messages or bulk emailed personal compositions from you *BEFORE* you send them. Again, think about the plague of telemarketers that has led many people to get a new telephone number that is unlisted.

### REAL DANGERS RESULTING FROM POOR PRACTICES

The increasing proliferation of computer viruses should make anyone leery of receiving email with attachments from anyone they do not know. That includes email that has been forward by several other people before it arrives on your system. All it takes is for one person to forward an email from a computer that has already been infected.
   As a technician with over twenty years in the trade, and as a personal computer owner and user since the late seventies, the malicious programming being broadcasted over the web these days sends chills down my back. Can you afford to have you hard drive's files corrupted or erased. Can you afford to have some unscrupulous person getting into your personal financial information on your computer through viruses that can create a back door into your computer's operating system while you are browsing or sending and receiving email? Don't think it can be done? Think again, and consider yourself warned.

### THE RAMIFICATIONS

Unfortunately the junk mail arriving on my computer system almost daily is so numerous and *so gross at times* that I am considering closing an established email account that I have had since 1996. I have also gotten to the place that I delete most forwarded emails from people without even looking at the heading because they have previously sent sometimes hundreds of non-personal emails to me in the past. I hate to admit it, but in doing so I sometimes may even accidentally delete bona fide personal messages from those people.
   Again, I—like many other people—simply do not have time to read though all the hash. Furthermore, I really dislike having to pay for something for which I did not ask and something that is of no benefit to me.

## POSSIBLE REMEDIES AND DRAWBACKS

Rather than close needed and established email accounts, some may be forced to begin using available email filtering services and software. The problem with using such is that some truly personal and important messages could be erroneously blocked as well. But something has to be done.

## SPREAD THE WORD

All are encouraged to send this document to others as they see fit. I also have a link that will allow you download this file in RTF format so that you can more easily print it out or email it to others. Likewise, you may simply cut and paste the web address of this page in an email message to others. It is http://www.lastchanceministries.com/proper.htm.

But remember, if you email it to more than one person at a time please make sure that you use the 'Bcc' or "Recipient List Suppressed" mode. ☺