

## Use BCC: rather than CC: or TO: to foil the spammers and respect your e-mail recipients.

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Sometimes it's beneficial, even necessary, for you to let recipients know who else is receiving your email message. In some situations however, it may be best to use the BCC option. Here are some issues to consider:

### Privacy

There may be instances when you want to send the same message to multiple recipients without letting them know who else is receiving the message.

If you are sending email on behalf of a business or organization, it may be especially important to keep lists of clients, members, or associates confidential.

You may also want to avoid listing an internal email address on a message being sent to external recipients.

If you use the To: or CC: fields to list all of your recipients, these same recipients will also receive any replies to your message unless the sender removes them. If there is potential for a response that is not appropriate for all recipients, consider using BCC.

### Tracking

Maybe you want to make someone, such as a supervisor or team member, aware of the email without actually involving them in the exchange. BCC allows you to accomplish these goals without advertising that you are doing it.

### Respect for your recipients

Forwarded email messages frequently contain long lists of email addresses that were CC'd by previous senders. These addresses are highly likely to be active and valid, so they are very valuable to spammers.

Furthermore, many email-borne viruses harvest email addresses contained in messages you've already received (not just the To: and From: fields, but from the body, too), so those long lists in forwarded messages pose a risk to all the accounts they point to if you get infected.

The additional benefit is that the people you're sending the message to will appreciate not having to scroll through large sections of irrelevant information to get to the actual message.

### What you can do

Encourage people who forward messages to you to use BCC so that your email address is less likely to appear in other people's inboxes and be susceptible to being harvested.

To avoid becoming part of the problem, in addition to using BCC if you forward messages, take time to remove all existing email addresses within the message.

**Source:** US Computer Emergency Readiness Team (CERT) National Cyber Alert System  
Cyber Security Tip ST04-008 - <http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/ST04-008.html>