Emails from Beacon

RECOGNISING EMAILS SENT FROM BEACON

All email messages sent via Beacon have a 'From' address ending with noreply@u3abeacon.org.uk.

Messages from Group Convenors and the Committee will be seen as having come from (for example) John Smith via iU3A.

Messages from the Membership Administrator will be seen as having come from Administrator iU3A.

The Beacon email messaging system has been set up like this to circumvent problems with certain mail hosts, in particular AOL and Yahoo, whereby messages from users with email addresses of these hosts may be rejected when coming from third-parties such as Beacon. Ordinarily, you can still reply directly to the sender (such as by pressing a Reply button) as the Reply to header in the email is set to the user's own address. However, a few email programs may not do this (e.g. Windows 10 Mail).

NOT RECEIVING EMAILS FROM BEACON?

If you think that you have not been receiving emails sent from Beacon or they are being put into a Junk folder, this is probably due to your email provider blocking the emails because it thinks they are spam.

Emails arriving in Spam or Junk folders can usually be dealt with by right clicking and picking from the available options like Not spam or Never block sender. This should add the sender's email address to a Safe Senders List and stop future emails from that sender going into Spam or Junk folders. You can also check that the sender's email address is not on a Banned senders list.

The exact method of changing your Junk/Spam settings varies depending on who your email provider is and whether you use webmail (logging in to a website) or if you use an email application such as Microsoft Outlook. Details for some of the more commonly used email providers and applications are shown below. If anyone can supply additional information on this subject and feedback about your experiences with Beacon emails please contact Graeme Bunting.

APPLE PRODUCTS

There are no junk mail settings on iPads, iPhones and Macs apps, so you need to log in to in your email provider's website and adjust the settings there.

OUTLOOK.COM (including Hotmail)

The following link explains in detail how to change your junk mail settings:

Outlook.com emails

Also see the recommendations for Hotmail users below.

SKY/YAHOO EMAIL

If an email arrives in the Spam folder, click More (or right click) followed by Not spam. This will move the email to the Inbox.

To check what is on your Banned Addresses list, click the gear (cog) icon, followed by Settings and then Banned addresses.

MICROSOFT OUTLOOK

If an email arrives in your Junk folder, you can right click and select Not Junk. This will move the email into your inbox and advise you that "Outlook will not block future emails from noreply@u3abeacon.org.uk".

Alternatively, you can click the Junk icon in the top menu or right click the email and select either Never block sender

lternatively, you can click the Junk icon in the top menu or right click the email and select either Never block sender or Never block sender's domain.

To manually add the U3A email address to the safe senders list, click the Junk icon in the top menu, followed by Junk email options. Click the Add button on the Safe senders tab and enter noreply@u3abeacon.org.uk in the box.

INFORMATION FROM THE BEACON ADMIN TEAM (4th August 2016)

Many Beacon users have reported that emails sent via Beacon to hotmail.com addresses (or outlook.com, which is the same system) are marked as delivered, but never reach the recipient's inbox or junk mailbox. I have spent much time recently to investigate this. I can confirm that both Beacon and SendGrid, which is Beacon's mail agent, process the emails correctly and that if they are marked as delivered then they have been accepted by the Microsoft Hotmail / Outlook system for delivery.

However, at some later point the Microsoft system can decide to silently drop an email rather than deliver it. I'm pretty confident (but am trying to contact Microsoft to confirm this) that this is because the Microsoft spam filter system has decided that the particular email to that particular user is sufficiently likely to be spam that it will not even bother to put it in the recipient's junk mailbox. As reported in the national press and BBC, Microsoft has been having serious problems with its spam filtering system since early June. At one stage it was letting almost all spam get through, and now seems to have swung too far in the opposite direction. Its corporate view seems to be that it wants to have a reputation that little spam gets through at the expense of dropping some valid email. Its rules for deciding what is spam are secret to avoid giving help to spammers.

So we simply have to take steps to avoid our emails tripping over any of the possible automated rules for being suspected of being spam. Some of the spam filter rules will depend on how it has assessed previous emails from the same sender, in our case the sender is noreply@u3abeacon.org.uk, and spam filters trust in a sender is built up (or knocked down) over time. Nothing will change immediately. So it is important we take as many steps in building trust as possible. Some steps can be taken at the recipient end and others at the sender end:-

Recommendations for Hotmail users

1. Log in to Outlook.com and have a look in your Junk mail folder. If there are any U3A emails in there right-click the email and choose Not junk. The email will automatically be moved to your inbox.

2. Click on the gear wheel icon (top right) to open the Settings menu and click Options. Then under Junk email, click Blocked senders. If there are any U3A addresses in the list, select them and then click the dustbin icon to remove them from the Blocked Senders list.

3. Now click Safe Senders (under Junk email). Type noreply@u3abeacon.org.uk in the box and click on the plus sign to add that email address to the Safe Senders list.

Recommendations for all Beacon users sending emails

1. Minimise the frequency of sending emails to similar large lists (over 50) of recipients. It is better to delay until you have more information to put into a single email.

2. Avoid sending emails that the majority of recipients won't bother to open. It encourages the system to assume that messages from the sender are spam.

3. If you are sending an email to a large number of people, say over 50, please accept that your email will be processed by spam filters in the same way as mass marketing emails. Therefore you should follow the following industry guidelines for such mail:-

i) Avoid or minimise sending attachments when sending an email to large lists of recipients. It is tempting to do so, as Beacon and SendGrid enable you to do so, but it is recommended instead to put the files on to your website and to provide a weblink to let the user download the file if they want. You can alternatively use services such as Dropbox.

ii) When putting a link (URL) into an email, do NOT use the URL itself as the clickable visible text. Instead use some descriptive English text. Note that this is the opposite of Beacon's previous guidance and is due to the way SendGrid handles links, and you may need to change some of your standard email messages.

iii) Maximum organisation visibility helps as well. Including your physical mailing address and phone number in your email footers helps mail providers recognize you as a legitimate organisation and sender of email. This also helps your recipients know that this message is indeed from you!

iv) Provide an explicit way for the recipient to unsubscribe from getting emails from you, even though you know they have said they want such emails. For example, at the bottom of your email: "To unsubscribe from these mails email Memsec@yourU3A with subject unsubscribe from emails". The Beacon team will look to see if we can automate adding such a message to your email in future.

Please also note SendGrid and Beacon often cannot tell that an email has been opened. SendGrid, like other mailing agents, uses a hidden 1 pixel as its only means of detecting that an email has been opened. If a user switches off viewing images, as often is the case when reading an email in preview mode, then this detection method does not work.