Misdirected E-mails

Did you know that misdirected emails to individuals who have the same or a similar name as the intended recipient is one of the most common causes of privacy breaches? Before sending personal information by e-mail, please consider the risks of sending this information by e-mail, and consider whether you can use a more secure method of sending the information (e.g. by sharing the personal information on Google Drive).

In addition to misdirected e-mails, some of the other risks of sending confidential information or personal information by e-mail include:

- E-mail can be forwarded easily
- Interception (e.g. by hackers, or by family members if a personal e-mail account is shared)
- Possible government surveillance

If you do need to send personal information by e-mail, a few things you can do to avoid sending that personal information to the wrong person are:

- Search for the person on the university directory, then copy and paste the email address in to the email;

- Share the information with the person on Google Drive (again, confirming the correct email address). This way of sharing information is more secure than e-mail. Also, if you realize after the fact that you have shared the information with the wrong person, you can revoke the recipient's access immediately (whereas with e-mail, once it is gone, it cannot generally be retrieved);

- You can change the "friendly name" that shows up when people choose your name from the options shown by Google. For example, rather than saying "Michelle Johnson", the name could be shown as "Michelle Johnson (IPO)". You can change your friendly name by taking the following steps:

- Click the gear in the top right of your email.
- Select Settings.
- Click the Accounts tab.
- In the "Send mail as:" section, locate the email address you would like to edit.
- Click edit info next to the address.
- In the "Name:" section, specify what you'd like your name to be and click Save changes.

- Post an identifiable picture to be associated with your email address. When people then start typing your email address into the e-mail, if there are similar or same names as your, you will stand out and people will know they have the correct email address.

- You can post an identifiable picture in Gmail by taking the following steps:

- Choose the picture you would like to use. Know where it is saved on your computer or shared drive.
- Click the gear in the top right of your email.
- Select Settings.
- Scroll about half way down.
- From the "My picture:" section, click Select a picture.
- The Upload a picture window will appear.
- Upload a new photo from your computer or shared drive.
- A box will appear over your photo, selecting part of it. Drag this selected area to crop your photo, or resize the area by clicking and dragging one of the corners.
- Click "Apply Changes".

You can select whether you would like all Gmail users to see your picture, or only those who you've allowed to chat with you, using the buttons next to your uploaded photo. We recommend all Gmail users for identification purposes.

Below, you can see the icon that the three of us in the Information and Privacy Office all use. Our office encourages other university offices to take a similar approach, in order to proactively reduce the possibility of privacy breaches.

- **Visible to everyone** means anyone who you email, or who emails you, can see your picture.
- **Visible only to people I can chat with** includes users who have been given permission to see when you're online and to chat with you.

Once you apply your picture, you'll be able to view and change it from your **Gmail settings** page, and other users will see your selection when they roll over your name in conversations or in their contact lists.