

Guidelines for a Club Email Address

Introduction

In 1979 District 70 adopted a policy of encouraging each club to rent a Post Office box and to have all mail for the club and club officers addressed to that Post Office box. The reason was the fact that, where a member's private address was used for club mailing, such mail was frequently going astray or not being received by a Club in a timely manner. This situation was accentuated by the regular turnover of members and officers in a typical club.

As a result of this policy implementation, 80% of clubs within District 70 now have a permanent Post Office box, with many of the remainder being corporate clubs using their corporate office address.

Electronic Communication

We are now in era where electronic communication is used for much of the information flow that formerly occurred by post. To assist in this, District 70 and Toastmasters International both ask each club to nominate an official contact email address. Many clubs have responded by nominating a member's private email address. This has resulted in all the same type of problems occurring with email that hindered snail mail communication in the pre Post Box era.

To overcome this, District 70 encourages each club to obtain a permanent email address.

Where a club maintains a properly hosted website, then that website will come with the ability to generate a number of email addresses at the club's domain name. Typically a club might use info@ for a generic club address while also using individual addresses for each officer (pres@ etc.). Another advantage of a hosted website is that they will offer the ability to maintain member mailing lists. Using these, a message to members@ourclub.org.au for example will be sent out to each member on the list while only involving the sender forwarding one message to one address. As well as commercially hosted websites, all these benefits are also available with a FreeToastHost website.

If a club does not have a website, then they can obtain an email address by the club establishing an account with an Internet Service Provider (ISP). For example, a club can sign up with an ISP like BigPond for their Dial-Up Casual Plan at a cost of \$25 per annum including spam and email virus filtering. The club will get an email address such as ourtmclub@bigpond.com which then becomes their permanently listed email address. Under this plan, all mail can be auto-forwarded to up to 4 officers. A password is provided and officers who have this can log on to the BigPond My Account site through an internet browser to maintain the auto-forwarding arrangements.

Similar services are provided by other ISPs. So it is a good idea to shop around and check what is on offer from ISPs in your area.

Typically a club will arrange to auto-forward all incoming email to at least the President, VPM and Secretary. The President may handle official communications and forward items like District newsletters on to the membership while the VPM will handle membership enquiries and the Secretary will keep track of all mail. However, arrangements can be kept flexible. The main thing is that whoever replies to an email should copy the other officers so that they will know that the message has been acted on.

Clubs with permanent email addresses who have implemented an arrangement like this have found that it is easy to stay on top of their email communication because they have the flexibility to cope with absences by officers because of holidays or business commitments and with changes of membership and officers.

Summary

While it has always been desirable for each club to have a permanent Post Office box address, it is now equally important that each club have a permanent email address of its own. In neither case should they belong to or be associated with a member of the club.

This is the email address which will appear on the TI and District 70 websites for enquirers to contact the club. It will also be used by both TI and District 70 for all electronic communication to the club.