Email in a Nutshell

Electronic mail, most commonly referred to as **email** or **e-mail** since c 1993, is a method of exchanging digital messages from an author to one or more recipients. Modern email operates across the Internet or other computer networks. Today's email systems are based on a store-and-forward model. Email servers accept, forward, deliver, and store messages. Neither the users nor their computers are required to be online simultaneously; they need connect only briefly, typically to a mail server, for as long as it takes to send or receive messages.

An Internet email message consists of three components, **the message envelope**, **the message header, and the message body**. The message header contains control information, including, minimally, an originator's email address and one or more recipient addresses. Usually descriptive information is also added, such as a subject header field and a message submission date/time stamp.

Electronic mail predates the inception of the Internet and was in fact a crucial tool in creating it, but the history of modern, global Internet email services reaches back to the early ARPANET. An email message sent in the early 1970s looks quite similar to a basic text message sent on the Internet today.

Popular email platforms include **Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail, Outlook, AOL** and many others.

Network-based email is now carried by the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (**SMTP**).

In a **POP3** email account, email messages are downloaded to the client device (i.e. a computer) and then they are deleted from the mail server unless specific instruction to save has been given.

With an **IMAP** (Internet Message Access Protocol) account, a user's account has access to mail folders on the mail server and can use any compatible device to read and reply to messages, as long as such a device can access the server.

Small devices such as mobile phones and tablets tend to use IMAP.

In order to receive mail on your device/computer you need a program or app (often called an e-mail client) configured for your own email account.

The email platforms tend to be accessed through a web browser.

Capitals are not used in email addresses but do not make a difference. Spaces are not permitted in email addresses. An **@** symbol must be present. The words/name before the @ tend to reflect the recipient's name. After the @ represents the address.

Spamming is unsolicited commercial (or bulk) email.

Email spoofing occurs when the email message header is designed to make the message appear to come from a known or trusted source.

Email bombing is the intentional sending of large volumes of messages to a target address.

Phishing is the attempt to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, and credit card details (and sometimes, indirectly, money) by masquerading as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.

The use of capitals and bold text in an email is regarded as shouting. Keep messages short and on point, acknowledge personal emails, don't send large attachments and include a relevant subject line.

CC (carbon copy) and **BCC** (blind carbon copy) are terms derived from letter writing and the use of carbon paper. When send out a single email to large numbers of people it is often advised that the recipients are BCC'd to protect privacy.

A **signature** placed at the end of an email is a standard response normally including company information, a contact name and a disclaimer.If an email has not been delivered, check the address for typos, if there has been a return failure response, if it is just a single person/company but all other emails are OK. Check the header and ask an expert!