

SLAA Sydney suggested guidelines for use of Email

Email is a valuable communication tool among SLAA members. However, with the 12th tradition of anonymity in mind, SLAA Sydney Intergroup believes it's wise for us to think about how we communicate via email.

We each need to be aware of how email might compromise our individual anonymity or that of another person's.

With these thoughts in mind, here are some recommendations. Please note that they are intended only as gentle suggestions for members to consider, and are not intended as rules.

1. When sending out group emails to other SLAA members, please consider using the blind copy ("BCC") tool so that all recipients and email addresses remain invisible and thus their surnames, workplaces and so on remain unidentifiable.

If recipients need to know who has also received the email, you could list them by first name and initial (eg: "I'm sending this to Janet A, Jane S, John S" etc), or by group ("I'm sending this to Intergroup members", "I'm sending this to members of SLAA Monday morning group" or "I'm sending this to my SLAA friends to see if you'd like to join me for dinner").

Alternatively you can simply address it "Dear friends" or "Hi all" if it's simply a general announcement.

2. You may wish to consider setting up an 'anonymous' email account for yourself, for example using just your first name and the first letter of your surname, or alternatively a nickname. This will protect you from people finding out your surname or place of work until you're ready to tell them yourself.

One way to do this is with one of the free email providers (so that your email address might read, for example, johns@freemail.com). If you choose to do this, it's important to make sure you set up the account without using your

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surname in any of the background account information. Otherwise, when the recipient double clicks on the address, your surname may be revealed.

Some free email accounts can be set up so that emails are forwarded to your regular account, although it's best to reply only from your anonymous account if you wish to maintain your anonymity.

Please note: in line with Tradition 6, SLAA does not endorse, recommend or have affiliations with any email providers.

3. It's generally best to avoid saving people's email addresses onto your computer with the word "SLAA" afterwards (eg: "Jane SLAA") or any word that would reveal that they are in recovery.

This is because, if you send out a social email to a group that includes people who aren't in the program, they would see the nickname "Jane SLAA" in the recipient list, breaking Jane's anonymity.

4. If you are happy to hand out your regular email account to other SLAA members, you may wish to consider deleting any email signatures that include work details or home addresses. If you can't/don't want to delete these signatures permanently, you may wish to consider deleting them manually each time you email SLAA members.

5. It's worth taking time to be aware of where your SLAA-related emails might end up. An email sent to one person could end up in the hands of a person (or people) you weren't intending it to be sent to. For some people this may mean they prefer not to communicate about SLAA matters using email accounts that identify their surname. For others this might simply mean that they are aware of the risks they are taking. It's a decision we each need to think about and take into account, based on our own feelings about anonymity.

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6. Please think carefully before using email to vent criticism of meetings, the program or other members, or to conduct arguments with other members. Written criticisms are less easily retracted or remedied than verbal ones. Emails that do include such matters are best not forwarded on to others in the program, and in particular it's best not to forward them to (for example) all Intergroup members or all members of a particular meeting. It's worth considering whether discussions about a heated issue would be better conducted in a group conscience or Intergroup meeting.

7. When printing out emails (indeed any SLAA materials that include members' names or other sensitive information, such as agendas or meeting minutes), please dispose of them with care. If possible, use a shredder or cut or tear up the email printouts so that information cannot be read by others. It's best to avoid throwing whole sheets into a recycling bin or rubbish bin where others could find them. Similarly, it's best to avoid reusing email printouts to print on the reverse side, in case they are unwittingly passed on to someone else.

8. Finally, when asking someone for their email address for a SLAA purpose (eg: if you are on a committee or part of a SLAA group), it may be worth asking the person whether they are happy for it to be used for non-SLAA purposes, such as social invitations.

In particular, please think carefully before using a SLAA member's email address for any purpose that entails promotion, marketing or advertising, whether of a professional or other nature. Members may feel resentful if an address they have handed out for a SLAA-related purpose ends up being used to promote someone's work or other activity.