Electronic mail

E-mail stands for Electronic mail. It is one of the most commonly used services on the Internet. It allows people to send message to one or more recipients. On October 29th 1969, the first message was sent from computer to computer on ARPANET. But complete email service was used in year 1971 by **Ray Tomlinson**. E-mail is a message that may contain text, files, images, or other attachments sent through a network to a specified individual or group of individuals. Examples of some E-mail service provider companies are **: Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo! Mail etc.**

Structure of an email

There is a standard structure for emails. Email contents are primarily classified as two, the header and the body.

The contents of the header and the body:

The Header

The email header gives us common details about the message such as the unique identity of the message. The details of the users of the 'from' and 'to' ends are also stored here. The email header consists of the following parts. However, the exact contents of the header can vary according to the email systems that generate the email message.

1) **Subject**
2) **Sender (From:)**
3) **Recipient (To:)**
4) **cc(carbon copy)**
5) **Date and time received (On)**
6) **Reply-to**
7) **Recipient email address**
7) **Attachments**

Subject

The subject part is the topic of the message. In most email systems, if the content view of the folders is set to view each messages separately, the subject part also will be visible with the user's name.

Sender (From:)

This field describes the 'from' address of the email. This will specify the sender's email address. Usually, it will be the "reply-to" address.

Recipient (To:)

This is the first/last name of the email recipient as configured by the sender.

cc(carbon copy)

A carbon copy, message is an e-mail that is copied to one or more recipients.

Date and time received (On)

This is the date and time the, message received.

Reply-to

This field describes the email address that will become the recipient of the reply to the particular email. When you reply, it will go to this email address despite the sender email address.

Recipient email address

The email address of the recipient is specified here.

Attachments

Some emails could be attached with files such as text, image, audio, video etc. These files are specified here.

Body

The actual content is stored in this part. This will be in the format of text. This field could also include signatures or text generated automatically by the sender's email system. The contents of the emails can be varied according to the different email systems used by each user.

Exercise:

1. What is E-mail? Define its structure.