

A Modern Workplace Obsession:

We are all complaining about too much e-mail and yet there are many office workers that feel compelled to over use the “Cc”, “Reply” or “Reply to All” functions in MS Outlook.

“Occupational Spam” is e-mail coming from people you know or work with that is *worthless*. Recent IT survey results are suggesting that the interoffice e-mail has become a major problem. Office workers intending to send helpful messages or cover themselves by copying large groups of people (at worst the entire company) are flooding people’s inboxes, straining networks, wasting time and money.

With the growth of SMS or text messaging using your mobile phone, people have become more inclined to reply to just about everything even when agreement is implied in the original message. In addition, there are some that cannot help but “Reply to All”, just to make sure that everyone knows they still exist and are working hard at replying to other people’s e-mails.

To avoid getting bogged down in the mounds of e-mail that fall into the “occupational spam” category, here are some recommendations that you could try.

1. Create a folder for all Cc’d e-mail and create a rule to automatically move the Cc’d e-mails out of your Inbox.
2. Set aside a time during the day to review the e-mail in your “copied” folder with the aim of deleting a large proportion of them. The small number of e-mail you keep should then be actioned accordingly.
3. Actively encourage chronic Cc’ers within your organisation to desist.
4. Count to 10 before hitting the “Reply” button. Avoid sending needless responses.
5. Where possible indicate in your original e-mail that a reply is not needed.
6. Count to 10 and then count to 10 again before hitting the “Reply to All” button. Your reply should be directed to the originator and not the other addressees, especially not those that appeared in the Cc list.