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PROFILE OF AN INTERNET TECHNOLOGY – EMAIL

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11. SEPTEMBER 2018

Communication has evolved alongside the evolution of the internet. The possibilities to send messages across distances started with letters and have turned into much more effective methods, and the Internet brought new possibilities. With a simple click, people can send messages across the globe. The invention of email is an effective communication technology with many possibilities, and it has laid the foundation for following technologies.

**Purpose and Primary Applications**

Email is a simple system that enables people with little to no computer experience can manage to communicate with others by sending messages. Email is a simple way of delivering a message. You write a message, add the recipient's address and give this to a delivery service. The service sends the message to the person you want to reach, who can read, file or delete the message (Crocker, “A History of e-Mail…”). Email was originally developed as a communication application; however, it is being used for a number of other functions like task management and personal archiving (Whittaker, et al., 276). Email is the most used form of communication in the business world, with over 108.7 billion emails sent and received every day (Radicati, 3).

**The history**

There are several stories of how and by whom email was invented. The development of electronic email can be considered a collaboration with several personalities and with the use of different software systems. As many technological inventions, it is difficult to determine one inventor of email, however, Ray Tomlinson is widely recognized as the inventor of email. Tomlinson was a computer engineer for Bolt Beranek and Newman (BBN), which was the company that was hired to build the first internet in 1968 by the United States Defense Department. (Sajithra et al., 70).. In late 1971, Ray Tomlinson sent the first internet-based email. Tomlinson first used local email programs called SNDMSG and READMAIL, but later developed the first ARPANET email application (Crocker, “Internet History”). ARPANET turned into the Internet we know today. Tomlinson decided used the “@” symbol between the receiver’s username and the computer the message would reach because it was not commonly used in computing and would lead to less confusion. Many argue that email had excised on individual machines from 1965; however, Tomlinson was the first one to connect the machines together. (Crocker, “A History of…”).

At the time the first emails were sent, few people had personal computers. The increased popularity of personal computers, lead to increased popularity of personal email. The marketer Gary Thuerk sent what is considered the first spam message in 1978 over the ARPANET and it was sent to around 400 users (Crocker, “A History of…”). In 1982, the first "Internet" standard for email was produced. In the following years, the implementation of remote access, mailing lists, the reply button and the emerge of email services improved the possibilities with email (Crocker, “A History of…”). The 4th of August 1991, the first email message was sent from space to earth (Press, “The Web Goes…”). In 1996, one of the world’s first webmail services, Hotmail, was founded and later acquired by Microsoft. The invention of email laid the foundation of the mass communication aspect of social media, developed years later (Sajithra et al., 70).

**Use of Email**

The primary use of email is to send messages to other users. While the majority of messages sent are business related, using email for personal purposes is very common. Messages can be sent across email services, from different devices, such as computers, smartphones and tablets, and in a number of languages. An example of a growing trend in the use of email is sending electronic invitations to events such as birthdays, weddings and anniversaries.

Email is used to send and store files. In 1992, file attachment was developed. Text files, pictures, sound, videos, Excel spreadsheets, etc. are attached to the message using the paperclip symbol in the email service. Email services provide tools such as folders, which enables users to organize the files received.

Email marketing is a cost-effective tool. With the use of research and services, email messages used for marketing can be customized to the recipient, which leads to more responses, registrations, and an increase in sales (Jenkins). Companies can send former and potential customers information about products or services and they can provide special offers with the messages.

**Evaluation**

ARPANET was not originally designed with email in mind; however, this application quickly spread and made internet sociable (Green, 32). Today, email is used all over the world because it is an efficient way to stay connected with friends and family and it is used widely in the business world because of its possibilities and effectiveness. Advancing from traditional mail, email is both faster and cheaper. Some of the issues with email are spam and viruses. Electronic email is the primary way of transmitting computer viruses. Another issue is the limitation of the size of attachments.

Email is used by the younger and older generation because of its simple concept and convenient layouts provided by webmail services. Web-based suites or web hotels, such as Outlook, Gmail and Yahoo Mail, are used to send, receive, store and organize emails. These webmail services have made the handling and use of email easier for users without extensive experience. Today, people can access their email on smartphones, which provides notifications when a new message has entered the Inbox. A number of applications are developed to make the use of email more effective. Email clients are software installed on a computer or smartphone to access your email. Email assistant apps, such as SaneBox, work within the email system, for example, to sort incoming messages (Duffy, “The 20 Best…”).

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