

Dealing with E-Mail Issues

The Problem

As we have all experienced from time to time, for whatever reason, an e-mail we are expecting does not reach our Outlook mailbox.

***** Note - If you don't want to read this complete document and want to go directly to a simple "cheat sheet" of instructions, [click right here](#).**

This can be extremely frustrating for both the user and the IT individual trying to help. Some reasons why an e-mail may not make it to its destination might be:

- It was never sent to begin with
- It might have been sent to the wrong address for a variety of reasons including:
 - The sender made a mistake
 - The sender's recent contact list might have the wrong address for you for a variety of reasons including:
 - The sender made a mistake on a previously sent e-mail and entered the wrong address for you
 - The sender's e-mail client thought it knew better and substituted a name from their global e-mail list for yours. As an example, on several occasions Outlook has replaced the name Julie Williams with JulieAnne Williamson as I addressed an e-mail to Julie.
- Routing between the sender's e-mail server and ours broke down somewhere along the route. This could happen for a variety of reasons including:
 - An electrical issue
 - A faulty router either on the sender's end, the GT end, or within our own building.
 - As the message travelled along the internet, that particular leg might have gone down and it did not get re-routed on an alternate path.
- The SPAM filter captured it and you accidentally missed releasing it.
- Problems exist with the sender's e-mail server

Dealing with E-Mail Issues

- Problems exist with our e-mail server

The above list is not exhaustive but it illustrates the complexity behind just one e-mail issue.

The Solution

When an e-mail issue is reported, the GTRC/OSP IT group researches it within the network environment of the Research Administration Building (RAB) and in some cases within the Georgia Tech network with the help of the Office of Information Technology (OIT). While we are limited in the depth and breadth of our investigations, there are some things we can do:

- Check firewall logs to determine whether a given message entered the building perimeter
- Check mail server logs to determine if the message reached the e-mail server
- Have OIT check router logs within a specific range of time to see if the message passed through into the campus
- Work with the sender's technical people so that they, too, can perform similar checks

Researching issues such as this takes the involvement of several people from multiple organizations. In order to maximize IT's ability to successfully discover the cause of an e-mail issue, the sender as well as the recipient of the message can help IT by taking the following steps:

Sender Steps:

The sender of a lost message, if they are not part of GTRC and OSP, should contact **their** IT department first. The GTRC/OSP IT group has no way of researching the path of an e-mail outside the walls of the RAB.

If the sender of a message receives an e-mail back stating that the recipient did not receive the e-mail (bounce back message) please send that email **as an attachment** to helpdesk@gtrc.gatech.edu with a copy to cornell.elston@gtrc.gatech.edu .

If e-mailing the "bounce back" message is not possible for any reason, then please fax a copy of it to 404-385-2078, to the attention of the IT Department. In addition please contact Cornell Elston at 404-308-3468.

Dealing with E-Mail Issues

Sometimes the problem is intermittent. The sender is encouraged to attempt to send the email again while waiting for a response from the GTRC/OSP IT group. If it successfully sent and received, please let Cornell know. It is recommended that the sender wait at least thirty minutes before attempting to resend the email.

Recipient Steps:

Once an e-mail is found to have missed being delivered, the recipient of the message, if an employee of GTRC/OSP, should report the missing e-mail right away.

Once an e-mail is found to have missed being delivered, the recipient of the message, if they are not part of GTRC and OSP, should contact **their** IT department and at least make them aware that there may be an issue.

The more information the IT group has on a given problem, be it e-mail or otherwise, the better the group can serve you as our customer.

Dealing with E-Mail Issues

Cheat Sheet

The sender of the e-mail should:

1. Contact their IT department.
2. If a “bounced e-mail” message is received, send it as an attachment (do not forward) to helpdesk@gtrc.gatech.edu with a copy to cornell.elston@gtrc.gatech.edu. If e-mailing the message is not feasible, fax a copy to 404-385-2078 to the attention of the IT department and call Cornell Elston at 404-308-3468.
3. Attempt to send the e-mail again a few more times. Report the results to Cornell Elston at the e-mail and/or phone number listed above.

The recipient of the e-mail should:

1. Report the expected, yet missing, e-mail message to their IT department
2. Ask the sender to contact their IT department as well.