Email Aliases

From the Lehigh account page (authentication required), you can create an email ‘alias’.

Overview

What is a mail alias? It is an alternate, additional “incoming mail” address which can be used to address electronic mail to your Lehigh email account. If your name is “Marvin Z. Martian” and your Lehigh username is “mzm0”, you can set up an alias so others can send you email at “marvin_z.martian@lehigh.edu”, or “m.z.martian@lehigh.edu” or even “spaceguy@lehigh.edu”. This does not remove or replace your default mzm0@lehigh.edu address, it is in addition to it.

Before you create a mail alias, think it over to ensure it is understandable and professional. Once you have established an alias and informed others, you will have problems changing it. If you decide today that using your full name “vanessa_x_venus” is good today, and all of your colleagues start using it, and next month decide that “nessa” is easier to type, you must inform everyone. Otherwise, as soon as you change it, mail to “vanessa_x_venus” will bounce back to the sender with a message such as No such user.

Then there is the problem of picking a good alias. Your name is “John E. Smith”. Should you pick “jsmith”, “j.e.smith”, “john_smith”, etc.? You have a risk of misdirected mail when correspondents mis-remember your address. Although the system will ensure that the same email address is not assigned to two different people, an inadvertent conflict can occur if someone assumes that “jsmith” has been assigned to “John E.” but it has really been assigned to “Judy E.”

A quick note: It is best never to try to guess someone’s E-mail address when sending that person a message. Aliases are a mnemonic, not a replacement for initial contact or directory services.

When interacting with some systems it’s important to send messages from your default email address and not your alias. For instance, sending messages to our Jira ticketing system from an email alias will cause the message to be discarded since it doesn’t have a way to link your chosen email alias to your account.

Policies

1. The name must meet common measures of professionalism and conventional good taste. For example, the alias must avoid the use of obscenities. A good measure is to think how the alias would be perceived by a prospective employer or your mother.

2. The general consistency of the format of “firstname.lastname” should be retained, but you may customize the name as it appears before the period. Therefore, although the alias must retain your real last name after the period, it is acceptable to change your alias from your first name to your middle name or commonly used nickname (such as from jessica.golightly@lehigh.edu to holly.golightly@lehigh.edu) but NOT to holly@lehigh.edu. Hyphenated last names after the period are acceptable.

3. The alias can contain the characters “a-z”, “0-9”, “.”, “-“, and “_”. However, remember that the purpose of the alias is to make the address more memorable; numbers in addresses generally are not memorable, and hyphens and underlines in email addresses often cannot be distinguished from each other. Note also that all alphabetic characters will automatically be converted to lowercase.

4. To avoid confusion with Lehigh usernames, unless the alias contains at least one non-alphanumeric character (see above), it may not be 4 characters long ending with 1 numeric digit, or 6 characters ending with 2 digits, and it cannot start with the letters “in”.

5. The alias cannot conflict with any existing Lehigh username, aliased or not.

6. The alias must be unique. If “Judy Smith” took “j.smith”, you must pick something else. Also remember that if Judy Smith previously had “j.smith”, and later changed it and you now choose to use it, you might also get her mail!

7. Pick a name by which you are commonly known, and do not pick another person’s name. If you are more commonly known by your middle name than by your first name, you might choose zaphod.martian@lehigh.edu rather than marvin.martian@lehigh.edu. Similarly, picking another person’s name may be flattering to be the other person, but it can create unnecessary confusion.