

## Re: Bcc

**Source:** <http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Outlook/microsoft.public.outlook.general/2004-06/0760.html>

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**From:** \*Vanguard\* (*reply-to-newsgroup\_at\_to-email.use-Reply.obey-signature.invalid*)

**Date:** 06/04/04

Date: Fri, 4 Jun 2004 03:47:34 -0500

John said in news:16a1701c44873\$49fe7bb0\$a601280a@phx.gbl:

>

> *It is the recipient that can see the Bcc list*

Possibilities are:

– You really are not using Outlook. Outlook does NOT insert a BCC header in the message body (which is both the headers as defined and inserted in the DATA command to the SMTP server along with the content of the message; i.e., they really are not separate pieces of the message). Perhaps you are using a plug-in or 3rd party product to send your "newsletters" and it is inserting the Bcc header. The \*sender\* dictates what headers will get inserted into the message (other than those that get prepended, if any, by each relay or by the mail servers). If you read RFC 2822, "Internet Message Format", the To, Cc, and Subject headers are optional (they may appear zero or one times) and are created by the \*sender\*, not by the sending mail server (because they are not part of the commands sent between the client e-mail program and the mail server). The mail server cannot do anything about a client program inserting the Bcc header, or any other headers, like those X-<something> non-standard headers that are often used for special purposes. The From header, according to RFC 2822, is required (but some mail servers don't check) and that it must contain a "mailbox-list" but, again, many mail servers don't check (and why some users will complain about getting a blank From header in a received message). For SMTP defined by RFC 2821 (you didn't mention what server type you use), the RCPT commands sent from the mail client to the mail server are used to define the recipients of the message, not the To, Cc, and Bcc headers with are merely \*data\* within the message. The list of recipients specified by the RCPT command are \*NOT\* listed in the headers prepended by the mail server. Unless the mail client inserts its own Bcc header (which is data, not a command or directive), the recipient won't know what recipients were listed in the RCPT commands issued to the sending mail server.

– I recall reading about some really old mail servers that violated the RFCs by not stripping out any Bcc header that the mail client might have inserted. The RFCs aren't quite clear as to which end is responsible.

Re: Bcc

I believe they mention that the sending mail server should remove it but, if not, then the receiving mail server should strip it out.

However, leaving it up to the receiving mail server means you are relinquishing control to an uncontrolled mail server and its peculiar and perhaps non-standard behaviors.

– You are using some misconfigured or rogue mail server that itself inserts a Bcc header into your message consisting of a compendium of all recipients that were specified in the RCPT commands that were sent to that mail server. Contact your ISP. If they don't change then wonder for what purpose they chose to disobey Internet standards. Maybe they are idiots and think this is some anti-spam measure (so recipients won't know that you delivered your boilerplate message to thousands of recipients and they aren't special). However, that violates the expected privacy of recipients that no one but the sender has their e-mail address.

So you might be using Outlook but something else is inserting the Bcc header. Could be a plug-in or mail-merge tool that generates the body of the message and adds the Bcc header and then just uses Outlook to do the sending. Could be a problem with your mail server. The recipients listed in the Bcc header should never see each other's e-mail addresses because the Bcc header should never exist. Note that RFC 2822 \*does\* allow the insertion of the Bcc header; i.e., it may appear zero or one times – but that is part of the \*data\* of the message that your e-mail client or something generating or modifying its data stream puts into the message, and should not be something inserted by your mail server.

While <http://www.cis.ohio-state.edu/cgi-bin/rfc/rfc2822.html#sec-3.6.3> gets vague as to how the Bcc field is handled, I've have never had a recipient that actually had a Bcc header in my message that they received where recipients were listed in the Bcc field in Outlook. What happens if you use Outlook Express or the webmail interface to your e-mail account, if available?