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Global Newsletter December 2007

Happy E-Greetings!

As e-mail is more widely accepted as a communication method for doing business, it is also more commonly being turned to for sending good wishes to friends and family members on special occasions and holidays. Slower, dial-up internet connections used to limit us to sending a text email as our message, instead of mailing a letter. But now faster, broadband internet can handle animations, movies and audio too. So, don't be surprised if you see more cards in your Inbox and less in your letter box.

For most electronic greeting cards ('e-cards'), you would visit a website, select your card type & design, and enter your message and the recipient's email address. Some companies are now also offering photo cards, which can incorporate one of your special digital photos in the design. The recipient will receive an email with a link to their card or a link to a website with a unique code to enter. It may also be possible for you to be notified once their card has been read.

Free?

There are many reputable companies offering free e-cards and a Google search for 'free ecards' will return 1.5 million results. Unfortunately, some free sites will leave you with more than just a card. One of the top listed pages in our search results instantly generated advertising pop-up windows. Another free site claimed that it contained no spyware or adware, but it did include the MyWebSearch product - which tracks the websites you visit for "the purpose of ensuring that our search partners are appropriately compensating us". Try websites of companies that you know and trust.



Real?

Malicious software developers like to take advantage of the holiday seasons, using the popularity of e-cards to disguise their dangerous software. If they infiltrate your address book, their message will look like it was actually sent from you, so your friends are more likely to open it. Be wary of the e-mails that you receive and only click on links in messages that you are sure of. It is better to phone your friend and ask if they really sent it, rather than regret it later as you battle advertising pop-ups.

For business use?

Regular electronic newsletters, birthday and holiday cards can be sent safely to your customer base, especially if you take some steps to ensure their safety. Always ask for their permission to be included in your email marketing. Use an email marketing system which easily lets them unsubscribe and fulfills any anti-spam regulations that apply to your country or territory. Also, choose an e-card site that actively working to protect you against e-card email scams (for example, provides details on what to look for in a legitimate e-card message from that site).

Talk to your local Computer Troubleshooter if you are concerned about the contents of an e-card that you have received, or if you'd like to learn more about communicating regularly with your customers via email.



**Contact your local Computer
Troubleshooters**

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