

Welcome to the Microsoft email culture

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20071205-00

December 5, 2007



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For good or ill, email is the most heavily used communication system at Microsoft, so much so that most people at Microsoft are known by their email addresses, sometimes more so than by their legal names! For example, most everybody at Microsoft knows Stephen Toulouse by his email address, “stepto” (pronounced as if it were spelled “steptoe”). Notice that the name of his personal domain is www.stepto.com; he has basically adopted his email address as his persona. This example is hardly an unusual one of how one’s identity becomes wrapped up in one’s email address. It’s more likely to happen if your email address results in something catchy and easy-to-say (like stepto). Though most people don’t take to this extreme; he tells me that he doesn’t typically respond to the name “Stephen” any more!

All this is a rather long set-up for today’s story, which is an amusing look at what happens when somebody new to the company hasn’t quite incorporated the Microsoft email culture into their world view. The names have been changed, of course, but the essence of the story is true.

From: X
To: Y
Subject: What is adamsmit’s email address, I need some bug info

Thanks in advance.

Y manages to keep a straight face in the reply.

From: Y
To: X
Subject: RE: What is adamsmit’s email address, I need some bug info
Cc: Adam Smith (adamsmit@microsoft.com)

adamsmit

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