Electronic Submission of Image Files

Summary

Image files for the Association's inter-Club matches may be sent on CD-R by post, or by electronic submission. Both methods are usually available, but electronic submission is quite easy. Each host for an event may publish a preference.

This advice describes the generic requirements for electronic submission; why e-mail is not desirable for sending competition entries; and lists suitable services which have been tested to work.

Generic Requirements

- For each separate match, the Host Club (receiver) and the Guest Clubs (senders) must make prior contact and agree about any method of electronic submission. Nothing should be assumed, and Guest Clubs must not send electronic submissions unannounced.

- E-mail is suitable for discussion about arrangements, for confirmatory messages, for transfer of occasional single image files, but is not suitable for electronic submission of multiple image files. The number of image files in a competition entry is likely to exceed the limit of attachments to an e-mail message. Even if image files are sent in separate e-mails, each one is large, and the total size of an entry is likely to exceed the receiver's in-box limit.

    - For example, Rosebowl matches require 15 image files. An SXGA+ sized image file, at best JPG quality, can be 1.5MB. Any electronic submission method has to allow for transferring a 25MB entry.

- The sender should be aware of the time required to upload possibly 25MB of data. A home broadband circuit is approximately ten times slower at uploading than it is at downloading. Be prepared for a long wait.

- The methods of transferring data described here all involve a degree of trust between the parties. Those parties are the sender, the receiver, and any service provider. E-mail confirmatory messages from the service provider may contain internet link addresses, which security software may identify as a risk. Links are a risk! Do not click on a link in an e-mail unless the source is independently verified. Where the e-mail has been generated automatically, allegedly by one of the transfer methods shown here, the sender and receiver should still confirm personally by a separate e-mail. When downloading, and if offered a choice between 'open' and 'save', always choose 'save', and virus check the incoming file.

Alternative Strategies

There are two alternative delivery strategies for electronic submissions.

1. The receiver of the entry sets up the process, and the sender complies.
2. The sender of the entry sets up the process, and the receiver complies.

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Process Initiated by the Receiver

A receiver-initiated process may be useful for a Club wishing to receive entries for its internal competitions regularly from members. Having set up such a system, it could also be used to receive entries for matches being hosted by the Club.

There are two approaches:

Independent System

DropBox is perhaps the best know example of such a system.

The receiver (Host Club) sets up an account, which will have a link name and a password. The link name and password are then published to those who need to send files.

The sender logs on to the account link using the password provided, and uploads the required file(s)/folder(s).

The receiver uses the account to download file(s)/folder(s) as required.

Clearly there is a setup requirement, and then a need to control publication of security information to any likely senders. A further security issue is that senders logged on to the system may be able to change or delete data inappropriately.

Web Site System

Clubs may integrate image uploading into their own web site. Usually this will be limited to members, but could be used by Guest Clubs

CACC has implemented web uploading for its own events, using the EntryWizard plugin for WordPress.

The sender will need to be provided with account and password information to access the system, and may also need detailed usage instructions.

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Process Initiated by the Sender

All the image files for a match, with a copy of the entry list, should always be placed into a single folder for that match. The folder should either be named as specified by the Host, or should be given a suitable name referring to the sending Club and/or the match and date. This is the folder which would normally be burnt to a CD for postal submission.

The match folder should then be compressed to a ZIP file. To do this, right-click on the folder; in the menu, click 'Send To'; then click 'Compressed (zipped) Folder'. (Although the icon is a folder with a zip, this is actually a single file of zip type.) Making a single file may anyway be necessary in order to use the free versions of some sending software.

A service provider is then used to transfer the file. This is done by noting the email addresses of both sender and receiver; transferring the file to the provider's server; and sending notification emails with a link to down load the file.

After receipt of the compressed zip file, this can be uncompressed to reveal the original folder and its contents of image files and entry list. To do this, right-click and click on Extract All to use the extraction wizard. Check the results, and confirm correct receipt by e-mail to the sender.

Service Providers

There are several readily available service providers for large file transfer. They can change their availability and facilities, and the data shown here is current. These providers are believed to offer an ongoing free service requiring no setup by the recipient.

CACC does not recommend any one supplier over another.

1. emaillargefile.com

   Up to 10 transfers can be sent per day. Files are kept for up to 15 days.

2. www.hightail.com (previously called yousendit)

   Registration is required. The LITE account is free, and a desktop application can be downloaded. Files are kept for 7 days.

3. www.mailbigfile.com

   UK-based. No need to register. Can be used to send multiple files and/or folders in one transfer. Files are kept for 10 days.

4. www.transferbigfiles.com

   No need to register. Can be used to send multiple files and/or folders in one transfer. Files are kept for 5 days.

5. www.wetransfer.com

   No need to register. Can be used to send multiple files and/or folders in one transfer. Files are kept for 5 days.