# *A Tale of Two Emails:* Conveying Technical Information in Email Messages

## Purpose

Good writers adapt their writing — including the level of technical language — to the audience. The purpose of the messages below is to provide details and information about how the recipients can respond to the situation. However, the email on the left is for a reader with technical knowledge, while the email on the right is for a reader without technical knowledge. Writers should adapt the level of technical language in emails for the audience.

## Things to Notice

⇒ **Audience:** The audience strongly influences the information included in each email. The audience for the email on the left is the IT team; the audience for the one on the right is the entire company.

⇒ **Structure:** Both emails begin with an overview of the problem. The second paragraph of the left email provides specific details, and the third paragraph gives information for what's to come. The email below has a similar structure. The first paragraph provides an overview, and the second paragraph outlines next steps.

⇒ **Use of Technical Language**: Notice that the language in the message to the IT team is more technical, while the language to the entire company is readily understood by a broad audience. Too many technical details would obscure the main point.

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### URGENT: SQLI Attack on Company Website

To: it.team@martyscrafts.com
From: maryhayworth@martyscrafts.com
Subject: URGENT: SQLI Attack on Company Website

Good morning team,

I am writing to notify you of a security breach last night in our Microsoft SQL database. At this point, we are unsure how many servers were targeted.

Regretfully, our ordering platform script was not configured to ignore metacharacters from user input. We believe attackers exploited this vulnerability in executing a SQL injection attack to gain admin access to our production order database. With this level of access, our master data and order history information could have been exfiltrated, compromising our online store data and other PII.

Be sure to take precautions to prevent further data breaches. We will review information access rules and safe passwords at our meeting this morning. We will also notify affected parties within legal time constraints.

Thanks,

Mary Hayworth
Chief Security Officer

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### URGENT: Data Breach Information

To: company.all@martyscrafts.com
From: maryhayworth@martyscrafts.com
Subject: URGENT: Data Breach Information

Good morning all,

Last night, we experienced a data breach on our online ordering platform. My team has identified the vulnerability the attackers used, but we still can't be sure of exactly how much of our information was compromised. The attackers gained administrative access to our system, which means they could have compromised customers' personal information.

There are legal time constraints we must conform to, so we will need to prepare to notify customers affected by the data breach. In the meantime, all employees must change their passwords immediately in order to protect our network from further data breaches.

Thanks,

Mary Hayworth
Chief Security Officer