

Netiquette (Internet Etiquette) Rules

CAPITALS/lower case: SENDING A MESSAGE WITH EVERY LETTER CAPITALIZED IS EQUATED WITH ANGRY SHOUTING BY THE READER. Capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title or heading.

Punctuation: Use standard sentence style and punctuation—e-mail is writing, too. (If you don't have time to shift and punctuate, your recipient doesn't have time to translate your message!)

Format: Some email programs (called email "clients") allow colored text and pictures ("HTML"), and others use only plain text—no colors, no pictures. Know how your emails look to others.

Email Addresses: E-mail addresses are treated like unlisted phone numbers—don't broadcast them in messages. Use BCC for more than one recipient. Exception: you KNOW they all email each other already, or you have EACH ONE'S permission to share the address.

Attachments: Do not send an attachment if there is ANY other alternative—MANY people will not open attachments because of the virus problem. Copy the contents into the body of the email, or send a link to a Web page (URL) with the info, etc.

If you HAVE to send an attachment, put the title of the attachment in the Subject: field to tell the recipient what is being sent, so they know YOU sent the attachment, not a virus. ·

Subject: Always include a pertinent subject title for the message; that way the user can locate the message quickly. And some email providers just won't send any emails that don't have subjects.

Paragraphs: If your message is more than 1 paragraph, double-space between individual thoughts so the reader can separate various points. Better is to focus on one subject per message—separate long messages with more than one topic into two emails.

Length: Don't send an email that is over a page long. Readers will not remember the whole thing, and will print it out to "get" it.

Editing: Read every message twice before sending to be sure that what you say is what you mean, and that you didn't cut out the main thought as you moved words around.

Spelling: Set up your email client to check spelling automatically. If it can't do that, it's worth running your eye over the message again before you send it.

Instant Messaging Language: Don't deliberately make your language hard to read. Writing "you," "are," and "be" as "u," "r," and "b" is OK for IM, but email is WRITING and used by a lot of non-IM types. If your correspondent doesn't use IM, don't try to show them how smart YOU are by using it to snow them--this "writing style" is irritating and rude to non-users.

Acronyms can be used to abbreviate when possible; however messages that are filled with acronyms can be confusing and annoying to the reader. Ex: IMHO= in my humble/honest opinion; FYI = For Your Information; BTW = By The Way; TAYL =Talk/Type At You Later; LOL = Laughing Out Loud.

Dates: Due to the International nature of the Internet, avoid misinterpretation of dates by spelling out the month: Ex: 24 JUN 96 or JUN 24 96.

Signatures: Many mailers strip header information which includes your return address. Don't arrogantly assume the recipient will know "it's you". In order to ensure that people know who you are, be sure to include a line or two at the end of your message with contact information. In Internet parlance, this is known as a ".sig" or "signature" file. Your .sig file takes the place of your business card. (And you can have more than one to apply in different circumstances.)

Signing documents via email: If you get something requiring a signature by attachment, open it and type in your name. These are legal if accompanied by an email that says you agree with the attached document.

Another neat way to “sign” contracts, etc., is to write your name on a piece of paper and scan it into your computer as a picture. Then paste it into your contract. It is particularly safe to send it back as an uneditable PDF file—use the free trial of the program CutePDF or the free Word 2007 add-in to change your document into the PDF format.

Original Message: Always include the original message—don’t expect the sender to remember what s/he wrote! And don’t include it as an attachment (see Attachments above.)The ">" sign denotes the text of the original email that you are replying to.

Another way to handle message replies is to quote text, prefix it with a >, leave a line, then reply to it. Quoted text is most useful if it's immediately before the reply.

SPAM: Do not send unsolicited, commercial messages. Sending SPAM is illegal, and most ISPs will dump you if someone reports that you sent spam through their server.

“Under United States law, it is unlawful "to use any telephone facsimile machine, computer, or other device to send an unsolicited advertisement" to any "equipment which has the capacity (A) to transcribe text or images (or both) from an electronic signal received over a regular telephone line onto paper." The law allows individuals to sue the sender of such illegal "junk mail" for \$500 per copy. Most states will permit such actions to be filed in Small Claims Court. This activity is termed "spamming" on the Internet.”

The Net: User Guidelines and Netiquette - by Arlene Rinaldi, <http://www.fau.edu/netiquette/net/elec.html>

Forwarding to 200 of your closest friends: Send on a Need-To-Know basis. Before you copy people on your messages, ask yourself whether they really need to know. If the answer is no, don't waste their time. If the answer is maybe, think twice before you hit the send key. AND always remove the email addresses of others in the message, and don't forward the messages as attachments!!

Hoaxes: Before sending the chain letter or tear-jerker on, check hoaxbusters.ciac.org, Hoaxbusters.org (NOT the same site), or Snopes.com to be sure it is not a hoax—especially virus warnings—some of which date back to 1997!!!! Hoaxbusters.ciac.org is a site maintained by the US Dept. of Energy; it has a good index—just type a couple of words and it will bring up the relevant hoax. Hoaxbusters.org is difficult to navigate, but is kept up to the minute. Snopes is riddled with ads and pop-ups, but it is also a very good information source.

Sarcasm: The reader cannot hear your vocal inflections and may misconstrue your intent. Don't assume that the inclusion of a smiley will make the recipient happy with what you say or wipe out an otherwise insulting comment.

Emoticons: When being humorous, use “emoticons” to express humor. Type them—see the list attached, and check out others on the Internet.

Smileys are graphics pictures. They are not visible if you use plain text to write your emails.



Beware: downloading that “free” Internet toolbar of 10,000 Smileys usually puts Spyware on your computer!!!



Language: Use only language you’d allow your mother or boss to hear you use.

Angry Messages: Never e-mail in anger. You can’t take it back. (Would you say it to the person's face?)

Privacy: Be professional and careful what you say about others. Email is easily forwarded, and has all the privacy of a post-card. Never send or keep anything that you would mind seeing on the evening news, including confidential club information.