Netiquette and More: Good Manners in Today’s Electronic Workplace

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What is Netiquette?

It is “network etiquette” - a set of rules for proper behavior online

*Netiquette* by Virginia Shea
Electronic Mail Etiquette

- Huge topic and lots of resources
- New culture/vocabulary
  - Netizen
  - Flame
  - Spam
  - Emoticons
  - Newbie
Email Etiquette

1. Be polite and remember the golden rule
2. Understand cyberculture – ignorance online is NOT bliss
3. Communicate clearly and properly without errors
4. Respect other people’s time and bandwidth
Email Etiquette continued

5. Behave ethically – adhere to the same standards online as you would in real life

6. Know where you are in cyberspace – behave properly with listserves and groups
Be Polite and Remember the Golden Rule

- Type unto others as you would have them type unto you
- Remember the human! – we lose facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice
- Usually start your email with Hello, Hi, Dear or whatever
- Usually end your email with Thank you, Sincerely, Take it easy, something!
Be Polite continued

- If forwarding, include a comment as to why
- NEVER TYPE IN ALL CAPS – IT MEANS YOU’RE SHOUTING
- Be careful using jokes or sarcasm
- Use simple emoticons to convey emotion
Emoticons – symbols to express emotion online

- :-)  Smiley face, happy
- :-(  Frown, sad
- >:-(  Angry frown, upset
- >:-{#}  Gnashing teeth, really mad
- :-@  Scream
- :-!  Foot in mouth
- (^.^)  Rolling Eyes
- (.-.-)  Napping
- ...-----...  SOS
Be Polite continued

- Don’t type hastily – remember, never put anything into an email that you don’t want the world to know about.
- You have no control of where an email goes after you hit the send key.
- If you’ve mistakenly offended another person, do not hesitate to apologize.
- Refrain from abusive or threatening behavior or language (flaming).
Flaming

- A flame refers to any inflammatory or insulting message sent via email.
- Best move is to send them to trash.
- If you feel the flame is worth responding to, you’ve started a flame war.
Understand Cyberculture:
Ignorance online is not bliss

- Avoid using sexisms, racisms, ageisms, religionisms, homophobisms, etc.
- Never be ethnocentric (thinking one’s own culture or nation is superior) – email is a global arena
- Privacy – there is no such thing (never email passwords, credit card numbers)
- Never ever send unsolicited email to anyone for any reason – beware of urban legends
http://urbanlegends.about.com/
Understand Cyberculture cont.

- Never forward email addresses to lots of people who do not want their email address sent out (use BCC)
- Don’t forward virus warnings
- Never send chain letters – stop them
- In summary: never send bulk email - spamming
SPAM: the equivalent of junk mail

- An unsolicited email (about a product or service) should never be sent unless you’re responding to a request.
- Never respond to link to remove you from future mailings (that you haven’t asked for).
- Spam Recycling Center
  www.spamrecycle.com
Communicate Clearly and Properly without Errors

- You **will** be judged by the quality of your writing (what you won’t be judged by is the color of your skin, your age, your clothing, your weight, etc.)
- Spelling and grammar do count!
- Proofread for errors!
Communicate Clearly cont.

- Always capitalize your sentences and use appropriate punctuation.
- Avoid excessively using acronyms in emails (ur for your, cya for see you later, and BTW for by the way).
- Take the time to make sure that you are proud of the messages you send.
Communicate Clearly cont.

- Always, always, always fill in the subject line and make it descriptive
- Use signature files as appropriate (keep them short)
  - Name
  - Email address
  - Homepage address
  - Place of business
  - Work address and phone
  - Character quote if you’d like
Communicate Clearly cont.

- Avoid special formatting: You *may* want to look **good** with *fancy* formatting, but others see plain black
- Use spaces between paragraphs
- *Asterisks* make a stronger point
- Underline with underscore symbols
- Dates: 4 JAN 2001 or JAN 4 2001, not 1-4-2001
Respect Other People’s Time and Bandwidth

- It’s your responsibility to ensure that the time they spend reading your posting isn’t wasted.
- Email wasn’t intended for long conversations.
- A summary sentence helps.
- Always edit out unnecessary information from a post you are responding to.
- Always minimize, compress or “zip” large files before sending.
- Respect the bandwidth (storage capacity) of a host system (>100K ask permission).
Behave Ethically: Follow Same Standards Online as Real Life

- Be ethical: if you encounter an ethical dilemma in cyberspace, consult the code you follow in real life
- Breaking the law is bad netiquette
- Ask permission for the right to download materials found at other sites
- Do not forward email to mailing lists without the original author’s permission
Behave Ethically continued

- Respect other people’s privacy: never read their email
- Don’t abuse your power (e.g. system administrators should never read personal emails)
- Understand the legal nature of email in your place of business (W&L policies on the UR Web site)
Know Where You are in Cyberspace: Listserves/Groups

- Lurk before you leap
- Keep in mind when in listserves or message boards that you are in a global arena
- Be forgiving of other people’s mistakes
- Save subscription messages (usually has unsubscribe directions)
Listserves and Groups cont.

- Apologize for cross-posting when you do it.
- Don’t use academic networks for commercial or proprietary work.
- For distribution lists – put in BCC to protect people’s privacy.
- Understand shared folders and who “owns” a folder.
Good Manners: It’s not Magic!

- Remember the human
- Remember the Golden Rule
- Be polite and well behaved
- Good grammar and writing
- Good ethics and understanding of culture
References

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