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Basics of Email Netiquette

**E-guide on social interaction and communicating electronically**

# Internet Communication

Communicating clearly without creating misunderstandings is a challenge—even more so when communicating over the internet.

# One problem is that you don't have any facial expressions, body language, or environment to help express yourself.

# Another is that there is little "give and take" for developing what you mean to say or are discussing.

# Main Guidelines

These guidelines hopefully will help you.

* **Be clear.**
Make sure the subject line (email) or title (webpage) reflects your content.
If you’re emailing an instructor, include the course and section information.
* **Use appropriate language.**
Use a salutation to greet the person.
If you have any question about whether you are too emotional, don't send the message. Save it as a draft, review it later, and decide when you’re in a better head space.
	+ Remember: no one can guess your mood, see your facial expressions, etc.
	All they have are your words, and your words can express the opposite of what you feel.
	+ Don't use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS—it’s the equivalent of shouting or screaming.
* **Be brief.**
If your message is short, people will be more likely to read it. Try to write as concisely as possible—stick to the basics and the facts.
* **Make a good impression.**
Your words and content represent you; review/edit your words and images before sending.
* **Be selective.**Choose carefully what information you put in an email or on a website.
Information on the Internet is very public and can be seen by anyone in the world, including criminals, future employers, and governments.
* **Sign your emails.**Include contact information (phone number) if necessary.

# Additional Guidelines

* **Get permission.**
Only forward email messages you receive if you have permission from the sender.
* **Remember that you are not anonymous.**
What you write in an email and/or website can be traced back to you.
* **Consider others.**
Don’t write something to others that you wouldn’t want someone to write to you.
If you are upset by what you read or see on the Internet, remember that person is a human, too. Forgive bad spelling or harmless mistakes.
If you think it violates the law, forward it to the FBI or your state's Attorney General.
* **Obey copyright laws.**
Don't use others' images, content, etc. without permission from the author/owner.
Don't forward email or use website content without permission.
Visit the Library of Congress' Guide on [Copyright Basics](https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/copyright/) for students and teachers.
* **Cite others' work you use.**
Refer to the style guides from the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html) (OWL).
* **Use distribution lists appropriately.**Be sure to get permission to share email addresses or use the blind carbon copy (bcc) field to keep email addresses private. Beware of sending too many emails to distribution lists.
* **Do not send spam.**Spam is posting or emailing unsolicited email, often advertising messages, to a wide audience (another way of thinking of it is electronic junk mail).
* **Don't forward chain letters.**
If you receive one, try to avoid opening it. Mark it as junk/spam and block the sender.
* **Don't respond to "flames" or personal attacks.**
Contact your webmaster for action and referral.
If it happens in class and comes from another student, contact your instructor.