



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Mail Manners

The following is a list of important email conventions that make communicating via the Internet safe and easy.

Use Meaningful Subject Lines

It is an easy practice and will help keep you on good terms with even your most email-swamped friends. Most people prefer to know what the email is about. A subject line tells you if it's a joke, photographs or some other non-urgent item that can be opened at a later time.

Don't Type Using ALL CAPS

It has been said too many times, but almost everyone finds reading text in all caps annoying. Moreover, this implies screaming online. So, even if you're not trying to yell in your online communications, typing in capitals will make most people think you are.

Quote Select Parts Of A Previous Email

One of the most common breaches of netiquette is repeating entire emails or postings when replying only to a small portion. When replying to a long email, it is best to highlight the minimum reference of the previous email to preface your response. This avoids multiple-reply emails where the messages get long, unwieldy and impossible to read.

Don't Get Too Attached

Attaching files to email messages is a powerful tool. It can be of great usefulness or a great nuisance. The first golden rule of sending attachments is to be sure to send virus-free files. A precaution worth taking would be to make sure your recipient knows beforehand the size and type of file you're sending. If you are on the receiving end, don't open any email attachments you're not expecting and don't know the origin of, even if it says, "I LOVE YOU."

Don't Spam

The worst online offense in most people's eyes is an unsolicited commercial email. Don't mistake email as an ideal vehicle for proving the "power of online mass-advertising." With some very powerful anti-spam activists on the prowl, you might regret it.

Don't Pass Around E-Hoaxes

There is a tradition as old as the Internet of passing around bogus virus alerts, unbelievable stories and fake news items. To put it simply, if it sounds too strange to be true, it probably is. If you get an e-hoax, verify it before passing it on. Nothing feels worse than sending your whole company a fake virus warning.

Don't Pass Around Chain Letters



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Another thing the Internet would be better off without is email chain letters. They're not cute. Don't send them to your friends. Don't even send them to your enemies.

Don't Use Excessive Signature Files

It can be really useful to have contact information appended to your email messages in a signature file. It is however unnecessary and bad form to use more than four lines for your signature file. Signature files can get very tedious in situations where they are often repeated like newsgroup threads and multiple-reply email discussions. In such cases, omit your signature file after the first use.