

SOCIAL EMAIL NETIQUETTE

What exactly is “netiquette”?

Netiquette represents the importance of proper manners and behavior online. In general, netiquette is the set of professional and social etiquettes practiced and advocated in electronic communication over any computer network. Common guidelines include being courteous and precise, and avoiding cyber-bullying. Netiquette also dictates that users should obey copyright laws.

Netiquette is a short form of network etiquette or Internet etiquette.

Although the specific rules governing netiquette may be different depending on the forum being used, it is equally applicable to chatting, blogging, message boards, email and surfing the Internet.

Email has become a primary communication medium for many of us. It is meant to be informal when used socially. It is a quick and cheap form of communication in today's world. Keep your emails brief, to the point and socially acceptable.

Email Netiquette:

Only include email addresses in the “**To**” field for those from who you would like a response from.

Only include email address in the “**CC**” field to let the “**To**” addressee know that you send someone else a copy for information.

If you are sending the same email to a number of people for information only, you should put their email addresses in the “**BCC**” field. Never expose your friends to strangers by listing them all in the “**To**” field.

Replying to email:

Click on the “**Reply**” button to reply to an email. Do NOT click on “**Reply to All**” button unless you want your reply to go to everyone the original email was addressed to.

The only time you should use the “**Reply to All**” button is if you are replying to everyone that is listed in the “**To**” field.

Never reply to spam. Just delete it or report it as spam if your email program supports it.

Subject line:

Always include a brief and meaningful subject in the “**Subject**” line of the message. This allows the addressee the ability to screen their email and open the most important messages first.

Forwarding email:

Don't forward anything without first editing out all of the email addresses, headers and commentary from all other forwarders.

As a courtesy, clean up your emails before forwarding them to friends. There are several email cleaner programs that will quickly and easily clean up that irritating formatting in emails. My favorite is Email Stripper at <http://www.papercut.com/products/free-software/email-stripper/>

Instead of forwarding, consider copying the body of an email you want to forward and then open up a new email and paste it into the body of the new email. Then add your "To" or "BCC" addresses and subject to the new email.

Check out information you are sending friends to make sure you are not sending a hoax. Investigate the authenticity of information at websites like <http://snopes.com/> or truthorfiction.com. If you forward an email that turns out to be a hoax, have the maturity to send an apology follow-up message. There is enough "***misinformation***" out there on the Internet. Don't add to it.

If you get an email that states you should forward it to all your friends, or just 10 people – do everyone a favor and just delete it. These types of emails usually have an email harvesting program attached to them.

Don't sign internet petitions and forward them on to your friends to sign. It is NOT an effective way of remedying important issues.

Know your audience:

When sending or forwarding jokes, political views or controversial matters, know your audience and don't send a friend something that would offend them. **If in doubt – don't send it!**

Body of your message:

Don't use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS – it is equal to shouting or screaming.

Keep messages short and sweet. People will be more likely to read your message. We all receive too many messages.

Remember that you are NOT anonymous. What you write in an email can be traced back to you.

Don't forward chain letters.

Use your Spell Checker and use proper grammar and punctuation.

If you are answering someone's email, make sure you answer all of their questions.

Avoid using long sentences. Email is meant to be a quick medium. If a person receives an email that looks like a dissertation, chances are they will not attempt to read it.

Never send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks.

EMAIL TRACKING PROGRAMS:

Any time you see an email that says "forward this on to '10' (or however many) of your friends", "sign this petition", or "you'll get bad luck" or "you'll get good luck" or "you'll see something funny on your screen after you send it" or whatever --- it almost always has an email tracker program attached that tracks the cookies and emails of those folks you forward to. The host sender is getting a copy each time it gets forwarded and then is able to get lists of 'active' email addresses to use in SPAM emails

or sell to other spammers. Even when you get emails that demand you send the email on if you're not ashamed of God/Jesus --- that is email tracking, and they are playing on our conscience. These people don't care how they get your email addresses - just as long as they get them. Also, emails that talk about a missing child or a child with an incurable disease "how would you feel if that was your child" --- email tracking. Ignore them and don't participate!

Almost all emails that ask you to add your name and forward on to others are similar to that mass letter years ago that asked people to send business cards to the little kid in Florida who wanted to break the Guinness Book of Records for the most cards. All it was, and all any of this type of email is, is a way to get names and 'cookie' tracking information for telemarketers and spammers to validate active email accounts for their own profitable purposes.

Do yourself a favor and STOP adding your name(s) to those types of listing regardless how inviting they might sound! Or make you feel guilty if you don't! It's all about getting email addresses and nothing more. You may think you are supporting a GREAT cause, but you are NOT! Instead, you will be getting tons of junk mail later and very possibly a virus attached!

Email petitions are NOT acceptable to Congress or any other organization - i.e. social security, etc. To be acceptable, petitions must have a "signed signature" and full address of the person signing the petition, so this is a waste of time and you are just helping the email trackers.

What is phishing?

Phishing is the attempt to obtain sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, and credit card details (and money), often for malicious reasons, by disguising as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.

Phishing is typically carried out by email spoofing or instant messaging and it often directs users to enter personal information at a fake website, the look and feel of which are identical to the legitimate one and the only difference is the URL of the website in concern. Communications purporting to be from social web sites, auction sites, banks, online payment processors or IT administrators are often used to lure victims. Phishing emails may contain links to websites that are infected with malware.