Netiquette

Email

- Frustrations
- Do's and don'ts
- How to be efficient

Summarize

- Group recorder:
  - Frustrations (what bothers you the most)
  - Do's and don'ts (what you would like to change)
  - Efficient email (what works for you)

Frustrations

- Brainstorm - make a list
  - What annoys you the most?
  - What would you change if you could?
  - What have you learned? What works?

Email efficiency

- Purpose
- Advantages/Disadvantages
- Methods
- Tone

Purpose

- What outcomes do you want?
- Audience/reader?
People are overloaded
- Be certain your message is worth the time. Do they need this information?
- Do they want the information?
- Does this action require a response?
- Do you need fast response?

Good rule, Safe assumption
- Assume the person you are contacting is as busy as you
- Or assume that person spends less time on email than you do

Decide if email is the best form
- Many cases call for no reply
- Do not feel obligated to make trivial email response
- There may be a better form for response
  - Letter, memo, phone call, face-to-face meeting
  - Email not ethical when emotions involved

Use telephone, speak face-to-face, or write letter to express emotion
- Email is not the medium to use when you want to express emotion
  - Anger
  - Frustration
  - Sorrow
  - Joy
  - ???

Advantages
- Email is fast
- Email is easy
- Email leaves permanent trail

Disadvantages
- Email is casual and recipient knows emails do not take a lot of effort (fast and easy)
- Hand written notes, such as thank you notes, sometimes more appropriate
- Lengthy reports easy to attach, but may be cumbersome for reader to download
Check email regularly

- Prioritize, establish mental system
- Respond to important messages promptly
- Delete unnecessary mail
- Make use of folders to organize saved email
- Set and delete files on a regular basis—devise your own system

Pay attention to each line of heading

- In: Enter email address of person you are contacting (double check for typos)
- From: Your computer will automatically enter your address (keep personal separate from business)
- Cc: Enter email of contact to receive carbon copy

Signature line- use a template

- Include your full name
- Title
- Always sign your name as well— as you would in a letter

When sending to a new contact

- Test the message
- Be certain to invite reply
- Add new contact to address book
- If sending outside your server, ask about format needs

With new contact, identify yourself with narrative greeting

- Do not rely on your email address or signature template (at bottom of page) to identify yourself to a new contact
- Use a first short line to identify yourself and your affiliation
- Often you will echo the subject line

Use a short, definitive subject line

- Subject: be explicit
  - The value of the subject line is indisputable
  - Never use terms "Word Check this out"
  - There are times when the whole email fits in a subject line
  - Example: Thursday's meeting changed to 9:00am (let complete meeting specs in meeting)
Forwards
- Forwards can carry deadly viruses
- Avoid unnecessary forwards as you would the plague
- Sometimes ok to weave extra trails, headings

BCC: blind carbon copy
- Enter the email address of a contact to whom you want to send a copy of a message without the knowledge of the primary receiver of the message
- Use with discretion - be certain your software is set correctly
- Use for lists or groups, email to yourself
  - Everyone else, too

Be cautious with lists
- Distribution lists, where a user sends copies of a single message to multiple readers are handy because of the number of people they can reach at once.
- However, be careful to protect privacy

Attachments:
- Attachments are useful to retain format
- Software usually has icon - easy to attach file
- Some users prefer to send text files within body of email

Reply:
- Use the reply feature of your software to quickly respond to a message
- If you only want the sender to receive message - know your software - do not hit reply all feature
- For the sake of clarity, delete all but the content necessary to give context to your response (erase extra trails, headings)

Focus your content
- Keep emails short, to the point
- Make certain your email is read by listing important information first
- Write your message from the top-down
- Do not over-use email
- Stick to a single subject
- Use a second email with a separate subject line to introduce another subject
Avoid all capital letters

- All caps send an inflammatory message
  - Give false emphasis to words
  - Appears disorganized
  - Spoil the reading

Format long message

- To keep long messages reader friendly
  - Use plenty of white space
  - Separate paragraphs, be brief and concise
  - Emphasize key points or use section headings
  - Make use of bullets
  - Streamline message, keep correct, unambiguous
  - Request response with key phrase: Response requested

Use complete sentences

- Follow normal conventions of effective paragraph writing.
- Standards for good sentence and paragraph structure apply
  - One-word replies are short, if you can be the question
- Always proofread
- Don’t be lazy – you cannot retrieve, once said

Use wisdom when emailing

- Be sensitive to who might read email
  - Email is extremely private, more so than letters or memos
  - Always consider who might see confidential, sensitive, or embarrassing information
  - Work-related email messages create permanence record – save
text accordingly

Fit your tone to the circumstance

- Choose words carefully
  - Most circumstances call for a blend of professional and personality
- Email creates permanent record
  - Email often used in body language or voice inflection – wind and interpret messages with discretion

Be careful not to sound abrupt

- Email can be more inflammatory than written letters or memos.
  - Be careful with the use of exclamation marks.
  - The tone of email can get distorted; short, concise sentences that wake-up email can slide across rude and abrupt.
  - Example: “I need immediate help with this.”
  - Instead be courteous – “Do you have time to talk?” (write number of words)
Never email when angry

In haste, you may have received or misinterpreted something out of context.
Do not reply in haste.
Make certain you have all the necessary information.
Again, once sent, never retrieved, permanent record.

Avoid flaming

Flaming is responding to the email of others in an opolitanized, emotional manner, often in an inflammatory way.

Lingo

- U: you
- B/B: be right back
- U: you are
- T/l: Talk to you later
- J/tk: Just thought you would like to know
- (: you have to smile

Examples:

- BFV by the way
- FYI: For your information
- FAQ: Frequently asked questions
- RFC: request for comments

Use proper punctuation marks

- The underscore character should be placed before and after any line you wish to underline...
- Use asterisks around words you wish to italicize...e.g. for emphasis or because they are foreign terms...

Return messages

- If you receive a message by accident, return to sender
- The electronic medium makes it easy for mistakes to occur. Be forgiving.
Proofread
- Don’t allow the seeming informality of email to cause you to be sloppy about punctuation, spelling and proofreading.

Email conventions change rapidly
- Listen
- Read.
- Be aware
- Stay informed

Managing incoming email
- Prioritize
- Know your company’s system, style
- Create your own personal system
- Know your contacts (do you need a junk address?)
- Delete forwards and spam
- Use software for extra control

How to stop unwanted email
- Do not reply to frivolous messages
- Remember, it is ok to ignore email
- Do not forward unless there is a specific purpose
- Make use of software, examples, spam busters, spyware, etc.
- Install a trusted anti-virus software

Avoid Spam; don’t overuse email
- Do not abuse or over-use priority or high-priority tags
- Remember the boy who cried “wolf” and use email sparingly with busy people

Establish a junk email address
- If you do not want a contact to email you at work, or at home, or all...
  - But you do not want to be rude
  - Or, a new email address is required
- Establish a free, email account (yahoo.com, hotmail.com, for example), to give to nuisance e-mailers
  - Simply if every couple of weeks
Portions of this information were adapted from:

- Article from IEEE, USA's Today's Engineer Feature, Joe Schall
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  August – September 2001
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Thank you

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