NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY

Email Guidelines

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Abstract: The following email guidelines are provided to ensure appropriate communications among members of the university community and with prospective business and educational partners in the global internet community.

Courtesy #1: The basic 10 Commandments[1]

1. **Do not type in ALL CAPS.** Text in ALL CAPS is hard to read and is considered shouting.

2. **Do not leave the Subject: field blank**. Enter a short phrase describing the content of the message. This phrase would be similar to a news article headline, or the subject line of a memo. A good subject helps the recipient organize and manage their email.

3. **Refrain from formatting your email with colored text and background colors or images in your day to day communications.** In the rare instances where a "fancy" email is appropriate, keep it simple. Select a template that provides a high contrast between the text and any background color or image.

4. **Respect the recipient's privacy.** When sending to a group of people, enter the email addresses in the Blind Carbon Copy (**BCC:**) line – *not* the **To:** line. Email addresses are like phone numbers. Only the owner of the email address has the right to authorize who should know it.

5. **Do not forward chain letters.** Generally, any email that requests to be forwarded to "everyone you know" or to "10 people" *should not be honored*. This includes forwarding jokes as well as those urgent warnings about bad products or the latest computer virus. The vast majority of these dire warnings are hoaxes, scams, or misinformed rants of people with a specific agenda.

   NOTE: If a message is compelling enough to warrant consideration for distribution to your *personal* contacts, verify the facts before doing so. Check for hoaxes and phishing scams at Snopes.com or similar website. Verify product claims and warnings by checking for corroborative stories from reputable sources.

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[1] Adapted from Email Etiquette 101, http://www.netmanners.com/email-etiquette-basics.html, retrieved December 12, 2007.

6. **Never give out personal information without verifying whom you are communicating with.** Also, never give out personal information of others without their permission.

7. **Make a reasonable effort to find the information on a website before requesting it.** Not doing so wastes the recipient's time and shows a lack of respect. If you still need help after looking through the available information, be sure to click through to the appropriate contact. Asking the webmaster for product support when there is a specific link for that will, at best, delay any response or may go entirely unanswered.

8. **Do not use Return Receipt Request for *each and every* email you send**. This is annoying and intrusive. It should be used rarely, for when it's critical for *both sides* to know when a message was received, such as with legal transactions. Be aware that the recipient generally has the option of declining sending a return receipt request, so the usefulness of this feature is somewhat arbitrary.

9. **All private email is considered to be copyrighted by the original owner.** Do not repost a private email message to a list, website, or to a group of recipients without permission from the author.

10. **Always minimize, compress or "zip" large files before sending.** Many people don't realize how big their electronic files are. Today's digital cameras use many Megabytes (MB) per image file, representing very high resolutions. These images should be reduced to lower resolutions and restricted to smaller display dimensions before sending. Most photo editing software have a "Save for Web" feature or wizard that will guide a user through the reduction process.

    The same situation applies to most files generated by the typical office application suite, such as Microsoft Office. A 30 page report with graphs and pictures can easily take up 3-5 MB. A typical 30 slide PowerPoint presentation can take up even more space. If the file being sent is for viewing only, convert the document to PDF before sending. This will reduce the file size by half or more. If the file will be edited, zip it before sending. In all cases, the idea is to limit the overall size of the email being sent to no more than 1.5 MB, for the message and attachment(s).

    As a corollary to this rule, **whenever possible, post the file to a website or network folder and *reference* the file in the email.** NJCU provide webspace and network folders specifically for this purpose. Announcement flyers should be converted to a web page and the location referenced in the email notice. Multipage documents for viewing should be converted to PDF, posted to a website, and referenced in the email message.

Courtesy #2: Show Professionalism

All messages should begin with a greeting line addressing the specific party to whom the message is being sent to. Keep the message contents on point with the Topic noted in the Subject line. Provide a simple closing, and *always sign your name*. Be civilized and courteous in responses. Type messages using standard sentence case and proper punctuation. Capitalize formal pronouns, names, book titles, etc. Spell and Grammar check all messages before sending. Always respond in a timely manner.

Do not Reply to a message as a means to send a *new* message. Doing so invariably leaves traces of the previous topic, which can confuse the issue at hand. Therefore, if this method is used to send a new message, be sure to replace the Subject line (including the "RE:" that is automatically inserted) with new information, and remove all traces of the previous email transaction from the message body.

As a corollary to this Rule, **when Replying, retain only the portion of the message trail that is pertinent to the reply.** In other words, edit out unnecessary content from the original post. This also means removing extended conversation trails from an ongoing communiqué. The only time a message trail is useful is when communicating to a generic technical support account that may be received and responded to by several, interchangeable technicians; or that fields a high volume of emails that make tracking an issue difficult. Even under these circumstances it may not be necessary if the issue is logged to some form of tracking system.

Courtesy #3: Never send unsolicited information

This is called "Spam". There is too much of this going around. The University provides various controlled lists that are used to send notices regarding university business to several groups within the university community.

Courtesy #4: Stay Secure and Legal

Do not share copyrighted materials indiscriminately, and always request permission from the author to post copyrighted materials . Keep anti-virus, anti-Spam, and anti-Spyware software up to date. Never send or forward attachments without checking them for viruses (NJCU provided systems are configured to do this automatically).

Courtesy #5: Remember the Human on the other Side

- Be forgiving,
- Do not perpetuate "flame wars",
- Share your knowledge,
- Stay positive and supportive,
- Never arrogant or self-righteous.
- Be mindful of the recipient's storage limitations

References

- **Netiquette Resources** PDF
  http://www.njcu.edu/dept/it/documents/support/Netiquette_Resources.pdf

- **NJCU Email Services and Support Documentation**
  http://www.njcu.edu/dept/it/support.html#email