Technology Etiquette: Email Etiquette

Students are more commonly using “text” language in professional emails. This workshop discusses email etiquette in the professional environment.

Elements of Email Etiquette

- General Format
- Professional tone
- Grammatical and spelling mistakes
- Message length
- Curse of Surprises

General Format

Emails should be respectful and professional rather than abrupt and careless. General format of emails should include the following:

- A clear subject line
- Salutation
- The email should be brief (one screen length) and should wrap around to next line. Omit a P.S. (postscript) since it could be missed.
- Check punctuation, grammar and spelling
- Font used should be professional or neutral
- Include your name in the closing
- Use caps when appropriate (emphasizes a raised voice)
- Avoid text message type
- Use plain text rather than HTML format
- BCCs (blind carbon copy) should be used wisely. If needed and possible, use CC (carbon copy)

Professional Tone

Non-verbal cues account for 65% of any message. In written statements, people tend to read between the lines. Complaints and concerns should generally be discussed in person. Using a professional tone will be received more favorably.

- Avoid terseness
- Read your emails aloud

Grammar and Spelling

81% of a survey sample said recipients had “negative feelings” towards the senders when the email consisted of grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes.

Message Length

- Warn the readers if the message is long
- Create a summary of the message
- Create headings for each major section (if appropriate)

Curse of Surprises

- Do not wait until last minute to introduce a problem or concern via email
- Express questions/concerns when they arise
- Re-consider if the email is appropriate or if it should be spoken in person

Netiquette is important in making connections and building relationships. It is crucial in order to get the right job, becoming a leader in your field or to getting promoted.