

E-mail Etiquette and Ethics

TIP A copy (Cc) of an e-mail is often sent to group leaders, supervisors, or others who may need to be kept informed of a situation, but not actually interact with the e-mail recipients in the To box.

Spoofing

Spoofing is the unethical and illegal practice of providing a **Subject** that lures an individual into opening an e-mail about an entirely different topic. The CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 provides penalties for commercial e-mailers who send deceptive messages.

When communicating through e-mail, professionalism and courtesy are expected. E-mail etiquette for composing messages includes:

- Be concise.
- Use manners. Include “please” and “thank you” and properly address people you do not know as Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr., and so on.
- Use proper spelling, grammar, and capitalization. Do not use all capital letters to type a message. All capitals are the equivalent of SCREAMING.

In general, re-read a message before it is sent. Always fill in the To box last to avoid sending a message before it is complete.

Using e-mail also requires following a code of ethics:

- Send messages through your account only. Do not try to deceive recipients by falsely representing yourself.
- Keep the subject in the message header short and truly representative of the message. Recipients may judge the authenticity of the message based on the subject and decide to delete the message. Antivirus software and e-mail filtering systems may send your message to the Spam or Junk E-mail folder if the subject is inappropriate.
- Use appropriate subject matter and language.
- Be considerate of other people’s beliefs and opinions.
- Respond to e-mail messages in a timely manner.
- Do not attempt to access e-mail from another account without permission.
- Do not give out another’s e-mail address without first obtaining permission.

E-mail messages are not private. An e-mail message goes through several mail servers before it reaches the recipient, making it possible for others to intercept it. E-mail messages are also easily forwarded. When sending e-mail at work or school, it is important to remember that employers and school administrators have the right to read any e-mail messages sent over the corporate or school network, as well as the right to track online activity.