

The South Bay Mug

MAGINTOSH

A Monthly Cupful For South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members, Jun 2007

MACHinations

A personal view from Bob

Please Be Nice

When we converse, we expect others to observe certain rules of behavior. The same is true of email. I'm not perfect, but I'm trying. Some tips:

Be concise and to the point. Summarize in the subject line and make it informative. Sometimes you can say the whole thing in the subject, but then add EOM "End of Message" to the subject so the person doesn't have to open an empty message. Avoid meaningless subjects like "Hi". That's a favorite of spammers and doesn't say anything.

Important: When you reply to a message select the relevant part of the message and click "Reply" instead of "New Message". Answer all questions, and try to pre-empt further questions. Don't quote the entire message including ads for AOL or Yahoo. Nothing is more wasteful than replying to a long message with the words "I agree" or "Okay" at the bottom.

If a message is intended for a specific person don't send it to a group. Our entire eGroup doesn't need, "Thanks Don for your reply".

If you need to send a message to a group, use BCC (Blind Carbon Copy). Just as it's not nice to give out someone's telephone number without their permission, don't distribute everyone's email address. Spammers love getting all those addresses.

Avoid using all capital letters except for emphasis. USING ALL CAPS MAKES IT LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING AND IT'S HARDER TO READ.

Don't write anything you don't want the world to see. Nothing is private. Anyone can forward it, even accidentally, and systems administrators can read any and all mail. If you are sending a message that might be

inflammatory, let it cool overnight first. Once sent it can't be retrieved and will live forever. You may run for political office someday and regret that email.

Be careful about sending jokes. Some people enjoy them but others might consider them a nuisance. After a joke is forwarded a few times you might be sending something like,

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>>>>>>> Joke has been forwarded  
>>>>>>> too many times.
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Entourage (and others) can remove quotations and re-wrap messages to make them more readable. Otherwise use a text editor (Find-Replace) to clean 'em up. Not everyone has DSL or cable, so be careful sending large attachments, e.g. >1 MB. If in doubt, ask first.

Using HTML or Rich Text to format messages so that they have fancy fonts, colors or whatever is asking for trouble. There are email programs (and some servers) that can't handle messages in these formats. The message will come in as utter gibberish or in the worst case, crash their email program.

Don't forward chain letters or reply to spam. Don't forward virus warnings. Most are hoaxes and it turns you into a spammer.

Take care with abbreviations and smileys and don't mark messages urgent or high-priority unless it really needs it. Try to use good spelling, grammar and punctuation. Don't expect everyone to read and reply to their email daily. I do, but my niece uses a library computer once a month.

If you are on an email list and activate an automatic reply feature, don't send "Bob is out of the office until July 31" in reply to every list message you get. It happens a lot and is not a good way to make friends.



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Helping Beginners

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