PR@SENSE

Communicate the communication

Theme of this Issue
Email Communication

Email communication

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PR-e-FACE: From the desk of Editor-in-Chief
Email has changed the way we communicate

Technology has changed the way we communicate. Two decades ago, we used traditional written mails and delivered physically. Email has brought enormous speed in the delivery. It is estimated that nearly 300 billions are sent every day by nearly 2 billion users.

While the mankind enjoys the speed of the communication, it also brings lot of challenges like spam, spoofing, phishing, etc. While we may not have control over such irritants, we need to be more cautious while handling the email communication.

In many instances where youngsters have shared their passwords with their girl or boy friends, it has lead to serious cyber crime activities and avoidable embarrassment to genuine persons. It is not advisable to share the passwords of the emails and social media sites with any one, however close they may be.

Another important area of concern in the email communication is the lack of courtesy, human aspect, clarity. Even lingos are used in formal communication.

In this edition, we have broadly covered the irritants, challenges and also tips for better communication. We hope you will enjoy this edition too.

Our February 2011 edition is the 'Diamond Jubilee Edition'. That will be our 60th Edition. PreSense is being published for the past 5 years every month without break. We thank all the readers for the support and cooperation.

K. Srinivasan

Important links of Prime Point Foundation

www.prpoint.com   www.indiavision2020.org

www.imageaudit.com   www.action2020.co.cc

www.corpezine.com   www.eltf.co.cc

www.poduniversal.com   http://prpoint.blogspot.com

Snap online survey findings

A snap survey was held during the first week of Jan 2011 to get the views of the readers. The readers were asked to specify some of the top irritants while sending and receiving emails. They were also asked to pose questions to the experts. This edition is prepared based on the requirement of the readers.

As sender - Irritants

- Not responding to emails, even addressed personally.

As receiver - Irritants

- Unwanted spam mails, chain mails and forwarded mails.
- Using unclear abbreviations, lingos even in formal communications.
- Long emails or too brief (both without clarity)
- Common message to too many persons with their IDs under To and CC. Receiver responding to all, even if it is not relevant.
- Lack of human touch in the emails.
- Posting personal messages and 'thank you' messages to all the members in the group.
- Improper subject line or no subject

Some common irritants, we face

We used to receive many number of mails for this ezine, discussion groups and seeking clarifications on education loan (ELTF). Some of the common irritants, we face are:

- Sender not identifying properly. Many times, mails are received without even the signature of the sender and the name.
- Message not conveyed clearly. Sketchy details given about the problems without details, leading to avoidable exchange of mails.
- Starting a new thread of message with new subject line and without earlier messages, in an exchange of mails, thus creating confusion and wastage of time in locating the earlier chain of mails.
- Lack of basic courtesy. After the completion of work, not acknowledging the help or sending a thank-you mail.
- Addressing the seniors without courtesy or respect. We received a copy of a mail addressed to Dr. Abdul Kalam, Former President of India, sent by a student addressing him as "Dear Kalam" . Indian tradition and culture warrants respect to elders by age and knowledge.
- One need not feel ashamed of giving respect and courtesy to others. This will enhance the respectability of the sender. Many successful persons have always given respect to others, irrespective of their age and stature.

Origin of email

In 1965, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) was the first to demonstrate the use of the first email system, known as MAILBOX. This was before internet work came into existence and therefore, this system was used to send messages to different users on the same computer.

Ray Tomlinson

In 1971, Ray Tomlinson, a former MITian, was working on TENEX operating system for BBN technologies as an ARPANET contractor. While using a local email program called SNDMSG, Tomlinson created the first email application when he patched a program called CPYNET to the existing SNDMSG. This introduced the capability to copy files through a network and Ray notified his colleagues by sending them the first email. It's said that the first message sent by Ray was 'QWERTYUIOP', which is formed by the entire first row characters of a standard keyboard. Mr Tomlinson sent this historic message to himself from one machine to another sometime in October 1971. (see picture below)

The history of email addresses can also be attributed to Tomlinson. He chose the '@' symbol to provide an addressing standard in the form of "user@host", which is in use till date. This is why Tomlinson is called the 'father of email' and is credited with its invention.

This is the room from where Mr Tomlinson sent the first email message from one computer to the other. Photo courtesy: http://tenex.opost.com/

Header and body of email

Every email has two parts (1) Header and (2) Body. The Header part contains the information relating to sender, viz. his email id, originating IP address, message ID, routing IP addresses, etc. Many of the criminals, who indulge in phishing, spoofing are caught by the Police Authorities through this Header component.

Web based mails like Hotmail, Yahoo, rediffmail, Gmail have different routes to find out the Header. Readers can search in Google and find out the procedures.

The body component of the email contains the message between the sender and the receiver.

Interesting facts about emails

- 1.9 billion users as at 2010 (expected to go up to 2.5 billion in 2014).
- Hotmail, Yahoo, Gmail, AOL contribute around 700 Million users.
- 2.9 billion mail boxes.
- 294 billion emails sent every day.
- More than 85% of the mails are spam.

SPAM

- Unsolicited emails to a mass audience.
- Cross posting commercial email to multiple newsgroups or email lists
- Internet based telemarketing
- Sending unsolicited messages to chat and instant messaging services
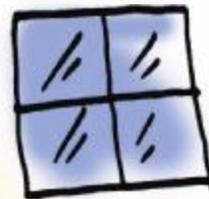- Attempting to fool search engines through massive or fraudulent submissions.

Business Communication Course @ Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

L to R: K. Srinivasan, N Ravi, M Narendra and T S Krishna Murthy

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai completed the first batch of 'Advanced Business Communication Course for working professionals'. An unique course, the first of its kind in India, was designed to suit the latest communication requirements of working professionals. The course covered all facets of communication, including reading skills, mind mapping, writing skills, presentation and public speaking skills, cyber communication skills, marketing communication, internal communication, etc.

This course spread over 20 week-ends (40 days x 3 hours) was handled by 15 experts and 10 CEOs and achievers.

This course was launched by Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, Former President of India in July 2010. The certificates were awarded in a simple and impressive function on 2nd Jan 2011. Mr N Ravi, (Editor of The Hindu), Mr M Narendra (Chairman of Indian Overseas Bank), Mr T S Krishna Murthy (Former Chief election Commissioner of India and presently the Chairman of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) delivered inspiring speeches on various aspects of communication.

Mr K. Srinivasan, Chairman, Prime Point Foundation was the Course Director and Prof. S Krishnamurthy was the Academic Coordinator.

You may listen to the inspiring speeches at
http://www.poduniversal.com/2011/01/business-communication-course-at.html

The Second batch of this course will start in February 2011. For more details, send mail to bizbvb@gmail.com

If you receive any mail, personally addressed to you, please acknowledge and respond. Not responding to such personal mails, may be considered as 'arrogance'. Remember, relationship is 'permanent', not your position in the office.

Email etiquette

1. Respect the receiver as a human being and for his time. Be polite, courteous and brief.
2. Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. Avoid lingos in formal mails.
3. When a mail is addressed to you personally, respond quickly and give respect to the sender. Do not respond to spams.
4. Do not attach unnecessary files.

5. Do not overuse the high priority option like Most Urgent, unless needed.
6. Do not write in CAPITALS and **bold letters**.
7. Respond in the same thread of subject keeping the original mail intact.
8. Add disclaimers to your emails.
9. Read the email before you send it.
10. Do not overuse Reply to All.
11. Avoid multiple emails in To and CC column. If possible use BCC. Use mail merger facility or bulk mail software.
12. Do not copy a message or attachment to others, if not required.
13. Do not use email to discuss confidential information
14. Use proper subject line. Never say 'hi' as subject line.
15. Avoid long sentences and lengthy uninteresting mails.
16. Do not send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks.
17. Do not forward virus hoaxes and chain letters.
18. While responding to discussions in the yahoo or google discussion groups, please do not post personal mails or single word 'thank you' mails. Post only the messages which are relevant to all the members.

Respect others' time and bandwidth

Questions on Email

In the online survey conducted by us, some of the readers have sought clarifications from experts. We have selected few important questions and given the response from experts.

When we address a group of people, what precautions should we take while drafting email communication?

(a) Ensure that the message relates to all the recipients. (b) Do not add multiple emails in To and CC columns visibly. Respect the privacy of others. (c) While responding to such mails received by you, addressed to many people, do not click 'reply to all'. Reply only to the concerned persons.

Can we get acknowledgement for the mails after they are read by the receivers?

There are some softwares available (freeware and paid) to notify, when the receiver reads the mail. You may search in google for 'read and notify' and pick up the appropriate ones.

(1)   How to reduce junk mails and spam mails?
(2)   Can I file a Police complaint against the spammers?

(a) Anti spam softwares are available. Though freeware softwares are available, get only paid softwares. (b) Use spam filter in your mail box. (c) spam filters go with some key words. If the spammers change the key words, then these spam will go to your inbox. You cannot avoid them. (c) Develop a habit of checking your spam mails twice or thrice a day. Some genuine mails might go into spam for various reasons. Delete the spam mails, after checking.
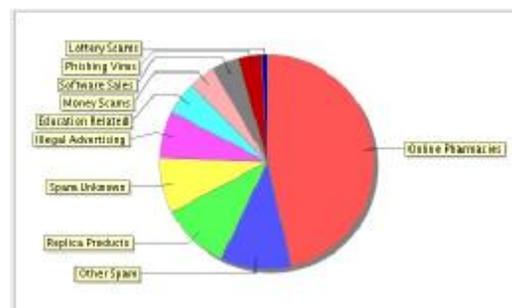
As informed earlier, more than 85% of the mails are spam and they emanate from many countries. Though, the origin of spam and the IP address can be detected, it is practically difficult to arrest them and punish them, unless the spammers involve in illegal activities and commit crimes. Some of the spammers send virus also. The best solution is to filter them and not to open the spam mails, if they are found in inbox. Develop a habit of deleting the 'spam mails' from your inbox first, before reading the genuine mails. Do not open mails and attachments from unknown senders.

Is it true that each and every mail is intercepted by the authorities?

Mails which trigger an alert are intercepted. Security Agencies have the means and authority to intercept all mails including emails and SMSs with the approval of competent authorities, subject to the applicable procedure and law in force. The same goes for phone and mobile conversations too.

PReTTY

Woman fired for USING ALL CAPS IN EMAIL

Vicki Walker, an Auckland (New Zealand) accountant, was sacked for sending supposedly confrontational emails with words in red, in **bold** and in CAPITAL LETTERS.

The Employment Relations Authority in New Zealand ruled that Walker was not fairly terminated from her position after sending the emails to co-workers. Her previous employers, ProCare, have now been ordered to pay New Zealand dollars $17,000 (US $11,500/€8000) for unfair dismissal.

Fired in December 2007, after two years with the company, ProCare claim Walker had "caused disharmony in the workplace by using block capitals, bold typeface and red text in her emails."

Walker claims that the one email used in evidence was in regard to how her team should fill claim forms, and specifies a time and date highlighted in bold red, and a sentence written in capitals and highlighted in bold blue. It reads: "To ensure your staff claim is processed and paid, please do follow the below checklist."

Walker plans to seek further compensation.

Source: http://thenextweb.com/2009/08/31/woman-fired-caps-email/

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