Top 10 Most Important Rules of Email Netiquette

Taken from an article by Heinz Tschabitscher. Visit the web for the full article:
http://email.about.com/cs/netiquettetips/tp/core_netiquette.htm?nl=1

The rules of email Netiquette are not "rules" in the sense that someone would come after you if you don't follow them. They are guidelines that help avoid mistakes (like offending someone when you don't mean to) and misunderstandings (like being offended when you're not meant to). These core rules of email Netiquette help us communicate better via email.

Listed below are 10 rules of Email "Netiquette":

1) **Use Email the Way You Want Everybody to Use It:** Whenever you are not sure how to react to an offensive email, whether your message will be misunderstood, whether you should send that attachment, whenever you are not sure what to do with or in email, remember the human being (just like you) at the other end reading your email and reacting to it with their feelings.

2) **Take Another Look Before You Send a Message:** avoid misinterpretations is to allow every message at least some minutes of rest after you have finished it, but before you press the "Send" button. Reread and reconsider the whole message when you return to it, possibly from the recipient's perspective.

3) **Quote Original Messages Properly in Replies:** When you reply to an email message, you should include that message, but only as much as is necessary to establish the context. Your reply should be below the quoted text, not above it.

4) **Be Careful with Irony in Emails:** An ironic tone is only wonderful and funny if it is understood, however. When the recipient of your message can see you, or when they know you well, this usually works. But with email irony can spark disaster.

5) **Clean Up Emails Before Forwarding Them:** messages that have been forwarded multiple times often contain '>' and other quotation characters in all the wrong places, lines are broken in even worse places, and email addresses of people you don't want to know are everywhere. Remove the email addresses from the forwarded message, clean up the message by removing '>' symbols and messed up line breaks and place your comments before the forwarded message.

6) **When in Doubt, Send Plain Text Email, Not HTML:** Not everybody can or wants to receive rich text messages. To be safe rather than sorry, send plain text emails by default, especially if you have not previously talked to the recipient.

7) **Writing in All Caps is Like Shouting:** Don't shout in your emails (and ALL CAPS is difficult to read).

8) **Avoid Sending Huge Attachments:** Sending large files can increase download times and clog mailboxes which can prevent the owner from receiving email all together (files that are greater than 500K are considered large files).

9) **Overuse of Smileys Should Ring an Alarm:** For those that are not aware, Smileys are the colon " : " , the hyphen " – " and the right apostrophe ") " used together to make a sideways Smiley face " :-) ". Overusing a Smiley might indicate that you're trying to say something you should not (and don't intend to) say in emails. You should check for possible misinterpretations that are not funny.

10) **Avoid "Me Too" and "Thank You" Messages:** Comments such as "Me too" and "Thank You" are really not necessary and typically do not contain enough content, but rather create excess email and annoyance from recipients.

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