

# ELECTRONIC M@IL- THE POSTMAN DELIVERS

ITV SERIES

LIFE ON THE INTERNET: # 11  
*Electronic M@il*

GRADES 7-12

## PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES

Electronic mail (e-mail or email) is becoming more and more common in our society. However, while most students have sent and received postal mail, there remain some misconceptions about the similarities and differences between postal mail and e-mail. This activity will reinforce what the students already know about postal mail and electronic mail, and also clarify differences between them, as well as point out differences between written communication and verbal communication.

This activity can be done in small groups of 3-5 students. Each student group is given a blank sheet of paper with a line drawn down it lengthwise. At the top of one column is the word similarities, and the word differences is at the top of the other column. To start off, ask the students if they have received any mail. When they answer yes, ask them if any have received mail over the computer. Hopefully, some of them will also answer yes (because they have America Online or Prodigy or other Internet access at home or school.) Then, discuss the following questions with the class. (If lots of students have done e-mail, you might want to merely raise the questions, and have the students discuss them in their own small groups. Otherwise, this is a good whole group activity.)

- Question: How did the post office know where to deliver the mail? How did the computer know where to put your e-mail (for your computer?)
- Question: How long does it take for post mail to get delivered? How long does it take e-mail to get delivered?
- Question: How do you know when a post letter was mailed? How do you know when an e-mail was sent?
- Question: How much does it cost to send a post letter? How much does it cost to send an e-mail letter?
- Question: How do you write a post office sent letter? How do you write an e-mail letter?
- Question: Why do you sign a letter? Can you put a signature on an e-mail letter?
- Question: Are there different types of letters that you can send? (personal, business, etc.) Are there different types of e-mail letters?

## OVERVIEW

In this lesson, the students will learn how to use electronic mail programs to access information about math and science resources. By learning how to send and receive electronic mail (e-mail) and join listservs, students will gain an understanding about how the World Wide Web and the Internet can bring the science and mathematics communities closer. They will also start to understand that the WWW and the Internet will continue to encourage collaboration and sharing of ideas.

The students will learn the rudiments of electronic mail using the popular software program Pegasus<sup>®</sup>. During the course of the class, students will send e-mail to each other that will help them learn functions such as signature files, attachments, and forwarding of e-mail; students will also explore listservs that allow asynchronous discussions to be held. In a cumulative project, students will send e-mail to university math and science students who will attempt to answer their questions or discuss ways to solve the problem. Extension activities will involve math and science projects that incorporate e-mail as the means of communication.



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THE POSTMAN DELIVERS

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students should be able to:

- Explain the differences and similarities between regular mail and electronic mail.
- Describe the parts of an electronic mail address.
- Demonstrate the ability to send electronic mail to other class members.
- Demonstrate the ability to attach signature files to electronic mail
- Demonstrate the ability to attach pictures to electronic mail.
- Use e-mail to contact science experts to receive answers to questions at their grade level.
- Use e-mail to contact mathematics experts to receive answers to questions at their grade level.

## MATERIALS

Previewing activity

- Butcher paper
- felt-tip markers
- blank sheets of paper (6-8 pieces per class)

"Anatomy of an E-mail Address"

- handout (1 for each student)
- "Smileys and Netiquette" handout (1 for each student)
- "Basic Abbreviations" handout (1 for each student)

## PREVIEWING ACTIVITIES (continued)

After the groups discuss these questions and others that arise naturally, have them then take the sheet of paper and write down things that are similar between post mail and electronic mail under the column entitled Similarities and have them write down those things that are different under the column entitled Differences. As a group, share the answers people came up with.

The teacher should write their answers on a sheet of butcher paper, so that the groups can reach consensus about how postal mail is similar to/different from electronic mail.

Following this discussion, ask the class if they have ever been misunderstood by something they have written. (You may have to prompt them. Did they write down something that they meant as a joke, but someone read it as being serious? Did they write down something using a slang term that someone else didn't know?) As they discuss this, the point needs to be made that electronic mail, just like other forms of communication (post mail, talking on the phone, etc.) can lead to problems if the conventions and etiquette are not followed. Following this discussion, prepare to show the video.

*Vocabulary:*

- **Electronic mail (e-mail or e-mail)** - communications sent over the internet (or any computer network) that consists of texts and/or other information.
- **netiquette** - the rules and manners associated with using the Internet, especially when using electronic mail
- **flame** - using e-mail to harass or insult someone. It is not a good thing to do.
- **listserv** - a mailing list that people subscribe to for free. Only people who subscribe to a listserv on a topic receive the e-mail on that topic. It creates a discussion group, using e-mail as the means of communication.
- **signature file** - a file that automatically attaches itself to every piece of e-mail that you send. It typically includes your name, e-mail address, school/home address, and may contain a saying or quote that you particularly like. Signature files are usually no more than 4 lines long.

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## FOCUS FOR VIEWING

The focus for viewing is a specific responsibility or task(s) that the students are responsible for during and after watching the video to focus and engage students' viewing attention.

Give students these specific responsibilities while viewing the video segment:

Ask students to listen to the person on the screen and be prepared to share with the class what electronic mail is, and what some of the rules of netiquette are.

After the section on netiquette, the students should be able to explain what a flame is, and discuss some ways to make sure they don't get flamed.

After the section dealing with how the Internet allows people to remain anonymous, students should be able to discuss why the Internet might help people who have disabilities (such as a stutter, or a lisp, etc.) participate in discussions.

*Note to the teacher: This video is part of a series on the Internet and how it is changing our society. This segment deals with electronic mail. Scott Simon will introduce the episode (this is the first segment you will share with the students.) Following this introduction, you will skip the first interview (about 6 minutes), and show the segment dealing with netiquette. You will show this segment, then skip to the end of the video for the final segment. This video does not require the students to have any previous knowledge of the Internet or e-mail. Your discussions will allow the students to understand how e-mail works, and why it is becoming an exciting part of their lives.*

## MATERIALS (continued)

- Computers connected to the Internet equipped with e-mail software (preferably Eudora or Pegasus)
- E-mail addresses for each student in the class (The systems operator can create some temporary accounts for the purpose of this lesson, but other extension activities can be done if the students have their own permanent account addresses.)
- Science and mathematics students at a university who are willing to simulate an on-line "Ask-a-mathematician" and "Ask-a-scientist" format while the students send e-mail with their questions.

*[Note to the teacher: This will take some pre-planning on your part. Since the goal of this lesson is to allow the students the chance to explore mathematics and science, it will not be met if the students send their queries to the nationwide "Ask-a-scientist" and "Ask-a-mathematician" programs, since these responses are usually done within 24 hours, but not within the class period. By contacting a university professor (it does not have to be a local university, since all the communication will be done over the Internet) and having the Science Club and Mathematics Club members on-line during the last half of the class, the students can ask, and have answered, questions that are important to them. If the students at the university don't have the answers, then they can tell the students how they would go about finding the answers.]*

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## VIEWING ACTIVITIES

**START THE VIDEO** at the opening, with the narrator saying “Hello, I’m Scott Simon.” **PAUSE THE VIDEO** when the narrator says, “Like the Internet itself, e-mail relies on its own rules, its own conventions.” Ask the students if they or their parents have e-mail addresses. Discuss getting e-mail and whether it is a good thing. **RESUME THE VIDEO** where the woman is being referred to as the Miss Manners of the Internet. **PAUSE THE VIDEO** when she says, “It is a little extra piece of information you can give them.” Discuss with the students: “Have you ever been talking on the phone and made a comment or joke that the other person misinterpreted?” As the students answer, guide the discussion so that they realize that lots of communication is done non-verbally (gestures, body language, facial movements, etc.) and these cues are not available with e-mail. **RESUME THE VIDEO.**

**PAUSE THE VIDEO** when she says “put the wink in when you are being a little sarcastic or making a little joke or being a little shy.” Draw a smiley on the board, and make sure that everyone can see that it is a smiling face. Ask the students if they think using smileys is good or bad. They will probably agree that they are good, but only if others understand them. The alternative, which they may feel is better, is to just write “<Joke>” before saying something that is sarcastic or a joke. Hand out the page of smileys and give them time to look them over. Point out that at the end of the second column is a list of e-mail rules of etiquette (or netiquette, as they are known on the Internet.) **RESUME THE VIDEO.**

**PAUSE THE VIDEO** when she says, “but don’t do it too often.” Discuss with the students why it is important that they understand the conventions of using the Internet and e-mail. Have them write on the smiley handout the conventions for italics, underline, and SHOUTING. Ask and discuss “Why don’t you want to shout very often?” **RESUME THE VIDEO.**

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## VIEWING ACTIVITIES (continued)

**PAUSE THE VIDEO** when she says “although I am sure it is going to happen sooner or later.” Discuss: What is a flame? Ask students why they think this may be more of a problem with e-mail than with regular mail or talking with someone face to face. (Answers may include: You don’t say some things directly to someone’s face, but you may write them down; You are responding as soon as you read e-mail that upsets you, so you tend to be more emotional; Because you don’t have a chance to see someone’s body language, etc., you may be more apt to misunderstand what they write, and get upset about it.) Discuss why it is important to use smileys or some other conventions to make sure people don’t misunderstand e-mail. **RESUME THE VIDEO.**

**PAUSE THE VIDEO** when he says “Doesn’t bother me a bit.” Discuss with the students the liberating effect of the Internet and e-mail. They should realize that unless they tell the recipient (who does not know them yet) who and how old they are, that person will not know whether they are in the 8th or 11th grade. The anonymity provided by the Internet allows an open and free forum for ideas— not just a discussion among those who are not shy, or who don’t stutter, or who the teacher calls on, or whatever. **FAST FORWARD** the video to where the narrator says “One of the things you will quickly discover is that with e-mail people use all sorts of abbreviations.” **RESUME THE VIDEO** after the students have discussed why the Internet can liberate those who are usually shy in groups.

**STOP THE VIDEO** when he says “IMHO- in my honest or humble opinion.” Discuss what other abbreviations the students may already know (FYI- for your information; ASAP- as soon as possible, etc.) Hand out the list of abbreviations and allow the students to look them over. Discuss with them the problem with using too many abbreviations (and smileys) that others may not understand. Some are more common than others, and they may want to stick with those.



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## ACTION PLAN

Have students write to scientists whom they have read about in their textbooks or in other science magazines. Their e-mail addresses can usually be found on university homepages where they teach and do research. Share their answers/responses with the rest of the class.

Have local politicians and city managers (in those municipalities with administrators and city personnel on-line) speak to the class about how e-mail and the Internet allows the government to better meet the needs of the people.

Send e-mail to the President of the United States ([president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)) as well as to the state's national representatives and senators concerning a topic of interest to the student. Share their results with the rest of the class.

Have an editor of a newspaper come to class and discuss how e-mail has changed their job and the world in which they live.

Have a scientist or mathematician from a university/college come and speak to the students about how e-mail has become an integral part of their professional (and personal) development.

## POST VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Hand out the "Anatomy of an E-mail Address" paper and discuss the parts of the e-mail address. They should realize that it is read just like you would read a post office address. In the first example on the paper, the address is read from the far right. First, the machine determines that it goes to the United States (us) and then that it goes to Idaho (id), and then that it goes to someone in the school system (k12 for kindergarten to twelfth grade), and then that it goes to someone in the first school district (sd01), and then that it goes to a server at Boise High School (boi1). Once it gets there, the server determines that it goes to the mailbox of student1 (me). To a greater or lesser degree, all e-mail addresses can be read this way. All students in the class should have an e-mail address for the class. After giving that address to the student, they should be able to describe the domain name as well as their own Internet "name".

After the students know what their electronic address is, they should be instructed to send e-mail to the person sitting to their right (or some other convention based on the room layout.) Each student should write and send a short message. Ask that it include at least one smiley. The teacher should circulate and answer questions/provide assistance until all the students have sent and received a piece of mail. Have the students read the mail, and then reply to it. (Click on the REPLY button and the machine will automatically fill in the address.) Continue until each of the students have replied to a message. Then have the students remove their hands from the keyboards and discuss signature files.

Signature files are 3 or 4 lines of text that are attached to the end of every piece of e-mail that is sent. As the students have realized by now, they can receive e-mail, but unless the author remembers to put in their name and e-mail address, the receiver may not know who wrote the e-mail. Signature files make sure this does not happen. (If the e-mail gets forwarded, the machine will not be able to send an e-mail to the person who wrote the e-mail because the reply function will only send it to the person who last sent the e-mail.) It is important that the students learn how to put a signature file onto their e-mail. The handout shows how to put in a signature file onto e-mail using Eudora or Pegasus. If you are using another software package for e-mail, make sure you know how that program attaches signature files.

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## POST VIEWING ACTIVITIES (continued)

Have the students write and save a signature file for themselves, then have them send a test message to themselves. The signature file should be attached. Have the students practice sending e-mail to each other while the teacher (and experienced students) provide assistance as needed.

Finally, the students should be asked to brainstorm questions or topics that they have an interest in concerning mathematics and science; the teacher should write these topics down on the butcher paper as the students bring them up. Once some topics have been written and students all have questions/topics that they would like to know more about, the teacher introduces the "Ask-a-scientist" and the "Ask-a-mathematician" program, along with the e-mail addresses. For the rest of the class, students should write up and send their questions to the appropriate address. When they get the answers back, have the students forward those answers to the teacher's e-mail address. The teacher can then compile all the correspondence together and print them off. Later, the class can go over these questions and answers during their science and math classes.

## EXTENSIONS

Handout the paper entitled "Listservs" and explain to the students that listservs are really discussion groups limited to those people who subscribe. All communication is done via e-mail. Some listservs have more messages than others, so it is important that the students check their e-mail daily when they subscribe to a listserv.

Have students join at least one of the following listservs and keep a journal of what topics are being discussed. The following WWW addresses lead to huge searchable lists of listservs. You, or your students, should explore what listservs will be of interest to you and your curriculum.

<http://www.tile.net:2001/listserv/>  
[http://www.lsoft.com/lists/LIST\\_Q.html](http://www.lsoft.com/lists/LIST_Q.html)  
<http://www.liszt.com/>

## VIDEO AVAILABLE FROM

ITV Overnight Block Feed.  
Contact your local PBS station for broadcast times.



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## EXTENSIONS (continued)

The following listservs are merely a sample of what is available, along with the instructions on how to subscribe using electronic mail.

### Math and Science Listservs

#### IMSE-L

Institute for Math and Science Education

Country: USA

Site: University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Computerized administrator: [listserv@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uic.edu)

Human administrator: [imse-l-request@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:imse-l-request@listserv.uic.edu)

You can join this group by sending the message  
"sub IMSE-L your name" to [listserv@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uic.edu)

#### KYPRISM

Kentucky Science and Math Educators (KYPRISM)

Computerized administrator: [listserv@lsv.uky.edu](mailto:listserv@lsv.uky.edu)

Human administrator: [kyprism-request@lsv.uky.edu](mailto:kyprism-request@lsv.uky.edu)

You can join this group by sending the message  
"sub KYPRISM your name" to [listserv@lsv.uky.edu](mailto:listserv@lsv.uky.edu)

#### MSIRE-L

RI Math & Science Resource Discussion List

Computerized administrator: [listserv@uriacc.uri.edu](mailto:listserv@uriacc.uri.edu)

Human administrator: [msire-l-request@uriacc.uri.edu](mailto:msire-l-request@uriacc.uri.edu)

You can join this group by sending the message  
"sub MSIRE-L your name" to [listserv@uriacc.uri.edu](mailto:listserv@uriacc.uri.edu)

#### SP-SCIENCE-MATH-EDUCATION-LIST

Science/Math Education Information

Country: USA

Site: State University of New York at Buffalo

Computerized administrator: [listserv@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu)

Human administrator: [sp-science-math-education-list-request@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu](mailto:sp-science-math-education-list-request@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu)

You can join this group by sending the message  
"sub SP-SCIENCE-MATH-EDUCATION-LIST your name" to  
[listserv@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu)

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*EXTENSIONS (continued)*

## Mathematics Listservs

### TEACHMAT

Methods of Teaching Mathematics

Country: USA

Site: University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Computerized administrator: [listserv@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uic.edu)

Human administrator: [teachmat-request@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:teachmat-request@listserv.uic.edu)

You can join this group by sending the message  
"sub TEACHMAT your name" to [listserv@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uic.edu)

### KYMATH

Kentucky K-12 Math Teachers Discussion List

Computerized administrator: [listserv@lsv.uky.edu](mailto:listserv@lsv.uky.edu)

Human administrator: [kymath-request@lsv.uky.edu](mailto:kymath-request@lsv.uky.edu)

You can join this group by sending the message  
"sub KYMATH your name" to [listserv@lsv.uky.edu](mailto:listserv@lsv.uky.edu)

## Science Listservs

### MAMMAL-L

Mammalian Biology

Country: USA

Site: Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 20560

Computerized administrator: [listserv@sivm.si.edu](mailto:listserv@sivm.si.edu)

Human administrator: [mammal-l-request@sivm.si.edu](mailto:mammal-l-request@sivm.si.edu)

You can join this group by sending the message  
"sub MAMMAL-L your name" to [listserv@sivm.si.edu](mailto:listserv@sivm.si.edu)

### BACK2MOON

ARI's Mailing List for Discussion Pertinent to Returning Man to the Moon.  
—Send list commands to [Majordomo@ari.net](mailto:Majordomo@ari.net)

This list serves two functions. First, it provides a vehicle for those wishing to express their opinions, pro or con, about the important issue of whether we (mankind) should return to the moon, when we should do it, how we should do it, how we should pay for it, and so on. Second, it is the primary channel of communication used for commentary on and questions about some of the longer articles which appear in the "Back-to-the-Moon" World Wide Web Public Policy Forum



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*EXTENSIONS (continued)*

## **SPACEVIEWS**

Space Exploration & Development newsletter  
—Send list commands to Majordomo@ari.net

“SpaceViews” Welcome to “SpaceViews” (tm), an electronic newsletter of the National Space Society (NSS); published by the Boston Chapter of NSS and Jeff Foust (editor). We will send you the monthly SpaceViews newsletter, containing articles about the exploration and development of space, creation of a “Spacefaring Civilization”, upcoming public events, and the status of current satellites and planned launches.

## **PHYSHARE**

Sharing resources for high school physics

Country: USA

Site: Pennsylvania State University

Computerized administrator: listserv@psuvm.psu.edu

Human administrator: physhare-request@psuvm.psu.edu

You can join this group by sending the message

“sub PHYSHARE your name” to listserv@psuvm.psu.edu

## **Language Arts Listservs**

### **Shakespeare Conference**

SHAKSPER is the international electronic conference for Shakespearean researchers, instructors, students, and those who share their academic interests and concerns. It currently includes more than 1100 SHAKSPEReans (many of whom are prominent in the field), from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States.

Like the national and international Shakespeare Association conferences, SHAKSPER offers announcements and bulletins, scholarly papers, and the formal exchange of ideas — but SHAKSPER also offers on-going opportunities for spontaneous informal discussion, eavesdropping, peer review, and a sense of worldwide scholarly community.

Subscription Address: [LISTSERV@ws.BowieState.edu](mailto:LISTSERV@ws.BowieState.edu)

Subject:<blank>

Message body: SUB SHAKSPER <your name>

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*EXTENSIONS (continued)*

**Social Studies Listserv**

**TAMHA**

Teaching American History

Country: USA

Site: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

Computerized administrator: [listserv@cms.cc.wayne.edu](mailto:listserv@cms.cc.wayne.edu)

Human administrator: [tamha-request@cms.cc.wayne.edu](mailto:tamha-request@cms.cc.wayne.edu)

You can join this group by sending the message

"sub TAMHA your name" to [listserv@cms.cc.wayne.edu](mailto:listserv@cms.cc.wayne.edu)

There are thousands more listservs available. Contact your professional organizations about listservs pertinent to your specific subject matter, grade, or interests.

Lesson plan created by Master Teacher Brenton Kidder, Boise High School, Boise, Idaho



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## ANATOMY OF AN E-MAIL ADDRESS

kiddeb@boi1.sd01.k12.id.us

kiddeb = me, the individual the e-mail goes to

boi1.sd01.k12.id.us = domain name

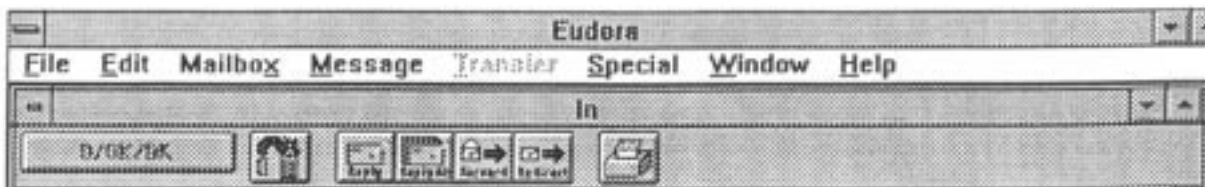
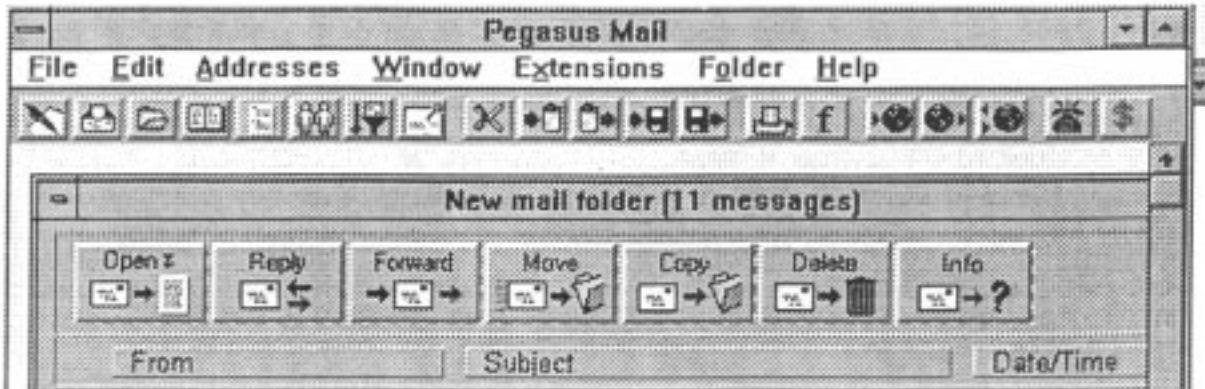
(or, another example)

bkidder@micron.net

bkidder = me, the individual the e-mail goes to

micron.net = domain name

## ELECTRONIC MAIL PROGRAMS (PEGASUS AND EUDORA)



Signature files are automatically attached to your e-mail when you send it.  
Signature files are found in Pegasus using **File, preferences, signature** and in  
Eudora using **Windows, signature files**

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## Smileys and Netiquette

Because you can't see the person who is sending you electronic mail, you are sometimes uncertain whether they are serious or joking. Scott Fahlman at CMU devised a scheme for annotating one's messages to overcome this problem. If you turn your head sideways to look at the three characters :-) they look sort of like a smiling face. Thus, if someone sends you a message that says "Have you stopped beating your wife? :-)" you know they are joking. If they say "I need to talk to you :-( ", be prepared for trouble.

Since Scott's original proposal, many further symbols have been proposed:

:)	humor
:>	humor variation
%}	humor variation
:(	sad
:<	sad variation
%{	sad variation
:)	tongue in cheek
:-!	foot in mouth
<:-)	for dumb questions
(:-)	for messages dealing with bicycle helmet.
(8-)	for messages dealing with owls.
d:-)	for messages dealing with baseball.
d :-o	hats off to your great idea
q:-)	for those who wear their caps backwards
@=	for messages dealing with nuclear war
o>< =	for messages of interest only to women
~=	a candle, to annotate flaming messages
oo	for somebody's head-lights are on messages
;)	say no more, nudge nudge.
:-\$	put your money where your mouth is
>:->	leer
;}	leer? (terminal dependent)
-<>	kissy face

:-	man playing an harmonica
O:-)	for those innocent souls =:-)
	from a hosehead
:-(*)	about to vomit
:-)8	well dressed
8:-)	from a little girl
:-*	mustache
:x(	have a code in by dose
:-)...	drool
8:]	from a gorilla
(:-)	scuba diver
P-)	wink
-)	getting tired
:-D	bigmouth
B-)	with glasses
B-*	glasses & beard
:-)))	reel happy
!!! -	Big Smile
:-X	won't say a word! - Lips sealed
:-~)	Ymmmeee - Lick lips
(-: :-)	Siamese twins
{:\	sounds like a duck
.\	duck variation
:-0	Ohhhhhh!
-O	Ohhhh variation
%+{	from the loser of a fight

### Summary of Things to Remember

- Never forget that the person on the other side is human
  - Be careful what you say about others
  - Be brief
  - Your postings reflect upon you; be proud of them
  - Use descriptive titles
  - Think about your audience —Be careful with humor and sarcasm
  - Summarize what you are following up
  - Read all follow-ups and don't repeat what has already been said
  - Be careful about copyrights and licenses
  - Cite appropriate references
  - When summarizing, summarize
  - Mark or rotate answers or spoilers
  - Spelling flames are considered harmful
  - Don't overdo signatures
- \*\*\* These materials are part of an electronic library. They may be copied for classroom use, but not reposted or resold. For more information contact [info@Scholastic.com](mailto:info@Scholastic.com).



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