Basic Net Etiquette Recommendations

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Electronic forms of communication like E-mail have become indispensable for educators. To use them effectively and avoid common pitfalls, it is helpful to regularly remind ourselves of some seemingly basic net etiquette rules like the ones below recommended by Joni Truville from the Alberta's Teachers Association.

- Make your messages concise.

- Clip the content of the original message in a reply and include only the part that is pertinent, that way the reader does not have to scroll forever to remember what was said

- Ask the original author's permission before forwarding his or her message to someone else.

- Do not use all capitals in your subject line or in your message unless you want to emphasize something. It is considered the equivalent of SHOUTING. If you want to make a point, try using *asterisks* or _underscore_ around the word or phrase you want to stress.

- Be careful with humour and sarcasm. Without the benefit of body language or vocal inflection, your words can be easily misinterpreted. Try using "smileys" or "emoticons" if you want to make sure the reader knows you are joking (but sparingly, because they can be annoying.)

- Use acronyms sparingly (for example: IMHO = in my humble opinions), as some readers may not know what they mean.

- Use virus protection software and scan attachments before opening them.

- Never assume that e-mail is completely private. It is a good practice to never send anything that you would not want shared in public.

- Do not attach very large files without the permission of the user. Some people may have slower connections.

- Do not send "carbon copies" of those funny email jokes to everyone you know. People are busy and it is good to check with them to make sure they want to be receiving this type of mail.