



IT@Intel Technology Tips

Intel Information Technology

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Intel IT creates and publishes articles for Intel employees to educate them on a variety of information technology subjects. Our goal is to help them improve productivity, take advantage of new IT services and raise awareness on other IT topics of interest. We've modified these articles from their original version for sharing with external audiences.

Think before you send: How to avoid six common but embarrassing e-mail mistakes

E-mail is a reflection of you and your professional demeanor

All of us send countless work-related e-mail messages every year. When you consider the astronomical number of times we click **Send**, the chances are likely that we might sometimes send something we shouldn't. At the minimum, such mistakes can cause acute embarrassment. At their worst, they can land you in the unemployment line.

Here's a look at six common mistakes and what you can do to avoid them.

Mistake #1: Sending before you mean to, or zapping a message off to the wrong person

We've all done it before: typed a message and clicked Send, realizing at the last moment that we forgot to include a vital piece of information or inadvertently sent it to the wrong individual. Once you hit Send, it may be too late to do anything—so the key is to take pre-emptive measures before you finish composing the e-mail.

How to avoid: Fill in the "To" field last. This prevents you from sending the e-mail to the wrong person, or sending the message too early. Also, get familiar with your software's **Recall Message** function -- but remember this isn't a guarantee that your message will be stopped before someone reads it. Even if you successfully recall a message, the recipient may still know that you sent a message and then recalled it. So if you didn't replace it with a corrected message, you'll need to get your story straight as to why you recalled it.

Mistake #2: E-mailing angry

We all get angry every now and then at work. As much as we enjoy the company of our coworkers, people can sometimes frustrate us. It might seem like a good idea, in the heat of the moment, to furiously type a message venting our anger and then practically slam the Send button—but the repercussions can be detrimental to more than just your keyboard.



How to avoid: Simply put, don't ever send an angry message. You can't always trust the Recall function to work. Instead, try adjusting your software settings to delay sending messages. This can give you the moment of breathing space needed to come back to your senses and realize sending that message may not be a wise choice.

Mistake #3: Expecting the instant reply

Our patience can sometimes wear a bit thin under deadline. How many times have you sent an e-mail, and then found yourself annoyed because the person on the other end didn't respond within five minutes? Have you sent an e-mail and then marched to the person's office 10 minutes later to ask if they received your message?

How to avoid: Take a deep breath. Rest assured, they did receive your message and will respond to it at their convenience. If you're in an absolute hurry, contact the person by phone or Instant Message.

Mistake #4: Sending a sloppy message

Do not rush your e-mails. When you quickly type a message and send it without reviewing first, you may have just sent a message – and not the positive kind—about you! E-mails are a professional document and a reflection on you.

How to avoid: Just as with anything else at work, take pride in how you compose your message. You're not Tweeting or texting, so avoid the cryptic or abbreviated sign-off. Keep an eye out for typos, and review your message before you send.

Mistake #5: Underestimating the subject line

When flipping through a newspaper or scanning news stories online, most likely it's the headline that grabs your attention and makes you want to read something. Well, the subject line is basically your e-mail's headline. Make it interesting enough to grab the recipient's attention.

How to avoid: Our inboxes tend to be overcrowded, so a good subject line will make your e-mail stand out from the rest. Be creative and to the point—it should resonate with the recipient. Forget using, "Read now and get back to me" (see Figure 1). Also, try to stay clear of "yesterday," "today," or "tomorrow." Including such words in your subject line may force the recipient to figure out what day you actually sent the mail. Use specific day and dates, if the content is time sensitive.

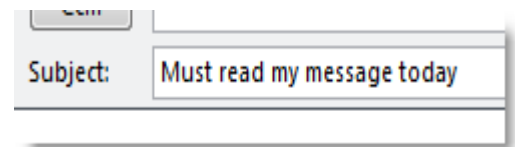


Figure 1: Do not use this subject line! Instead, make it specific, descriptive and add any needed time-sensitive context.

Mistake #6: Relying too much on e-mail.

As much as we sometimes want to believe, our fellow coworkers aren't sitting around waiting for our message to materialize in their inbox. Sometimes a red exclamation point just doesn't do enough to get your sense of urgency across.

How to avoid: If you're truly under deadline pressure, try and conduct your business in person, or pick up the phone.

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