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Email Policy – Guidelines
Approved August 18, 2009
by and for the RED RIVER UU Board of Trustees

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These guidelines were prepared to improve and promote quality communications within Red River Unitarian Universalist Church.

- Federal and State Statutes include electronic mail in their harassment laws. It is important to remember that what we say in an email is the same as what say in a written letter.
- No emails written within RED RIVER UU shall be used for commercial purposes.
- If it's unethical in real life, it's unethical in email.
- Consider the ethical nature of communications and the unique ethical situations that emails create. Before you type anything into a message, have explicit answers for two questions.

  1. Why am I writing this?
  2. What exactly do I want the result of this message to be?

What are the RED RIVER UU email etiquette rules? While there are many rules out there, below are what we consider to be the 21 most important email etiquette rules.

1. Be concise and to the point.
2. Be polite. Conciseness can be misinterpreted as terseness.
3. Apply "hard copy correspondence rules" to email: spelling, grammar, punctuation, and paragraphing.
4. Respond to email within 24 hours, if possible.
5. Do not overuse the high priority option.
6. Do not write in CAPITALS (this means you're shouting) or in all lower case.
7. Include the message thread (from the original message) so your response has context.
8. Re-read the email before you send it (for tone, context, mechanics).
9. Use 'request delivery' and 'read receipts' sparingly.
10. Use a clear subject.
11. Include a brief closing/signature. Don't over-elaborate and never use a scanned signature.
12. Avoid overuse of Reply to All or CC (carbon copy).
13. Be careful when replying to mailing list messages or to messages sent to many recipients. Are you sure you want to reply to the whole list?
14. Use BCC (blind carbon copy) with care. One good use of BCC is keeping individual recipient's email addresses private. It also prevents the recipient from using reply to all inappropriately.
15. Do not use email to discuss information that is confidential, controversial, complex, or subject to misinterpretation.
16. Don't send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist, or obscene remarks.
17. Don't reply to spam.
18. Save sensitive subjects for the phone or face to face.
19. Interpret email in the most positive way possible.
20. Don't reply to an email message when angry, as you can regret ir later. Email means eternal memory.
21. Consider deleting the notice or disclaimer before replying or forwarding. A new message will be attached to the message when you send.