Network Working Group   S. Hambridge
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                        Netiquette Guidelines

Status of This Memo

   This memo provides information for the Internet community. This memo
   does not specify an Internet standard of any kind. Distribution of
   this memo is unlimited.

Abstract

   This document provides a minimum set of guidelines for Network
   Etiquette (Netiquette) which organizations may take and adapt for
   their own use. As such, it is deliberately written in a bulleted
   format to make adaptation easier and to make any particular item easy
   (or easier) to find. It also functions as a minimum set of
   guidelines for individuals, both users and administrators. This memo
   is the product of the Responsible Use of the Network (RUN) Working
   Group of the IETF.

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1.0 Introduction

   In the past, the population of people using the Internet had "grown
   up" with the Internet, were technically minded, and understood the
   nature of the transport and the protocols. Today, the community of
   Internet users includes people who are new to the environment. These
   "Newbies" are unfamiliar with the culture and don't need to know
   about transport and protocols. In order to bring these new users into
   the Internet culture quickly, this Guide offers a minimum set of
   behaviors which organizations and individuals may take and adapt for
   their own use. Individuals should be aware that no matter who
   supplies their Internet access, be it an Internet Service Provider
   through a private account, or a student account at a University, or

an account through a corporation, that those organizations have
regulations about ownership of mail and files, about what is proper
to post or send, and how to present yourself. Be sure to check with
the local authority for specific guidelines.

We've organized this material into three sections: One-to-one
communication, which includes mail and talk; One-to-many
communications, which includes mailing lists and NetNews; and
Information Services, which includes ftp, WWW, Wais, Gopher, MUDs and
MOOs.   Finally, we have a Selected Bibliography, which may be used
for reference.

2.0 One-to-One Communication (electronic mail, talk)

We define one-to-one communications as those in which a person is
communicating with another person as if face-to-face: a dialog. In
general, rules of common courtesy for interaction with people should
be in force for any situation and on the Internet it's doubly
important where, for example, body language and tone of voice must be
inferred. For more information on Netiquette for communicating via
electronic mail and talk, check references [1,23,25,27] in the
Selected Bibliography.

2.1 User Guidelines

2.1.1 For mail:

   - Unless you have your own Internet access through an Internet
     provider, be sure to check with your employer about ownership
     of electronic mail. Laws about the ownership of electronic mail
     vary from place to place.

   - Unless you are using an encryption device (hardware or software),
     you should assume that mail on the Internet is not secure. Never
     put in a mail message anything you would not put on a postcard.

   - Respect the copyright on material that you reproduce. Almost
     every country has copyright laws.

   - If you are forwarding or re-posting a message you've received, do
     not change the wording. If the message was a personal message to
     you and you are re-posting to a group, you should ask permission
     first. You may shorten the message and quote only relevant parts,
     but be sure you give proper attribution.

   - Never send chain letters via electronic mail. Chain letters
     are forbidden on the Internet. Your network privileges
     will be revoked. Notify your local system administrator

    if your ever receive one.

  - A good rule of thumb: Be conservative in what you send and
    liberal in what you receive. You should not send heated messages
    (we call these "flames") even if you are provoked. On the other
    hand, you shouldn't be surprised if you get flamed and it's
    prudent not to respond to flames.

  - In general, it's a good idea to at least check all your mail
    subjects before responding to a message. Sometimes a person who
    asks you for help (or clarification) will send another message
    which effectively says "Never Mind". Also make sure that any
    message you respond to was directed to you. You might be cc:ed
    rather than the primary recipient.

  - Make things easy for the recipient. Many mailers strip header
    information which includes your return address. In order to
    ensure that people know who you are, be sure to include a line
    or two at the end of your message with contact information. You
    can create this file ahead of time and add it to the end of your
    messages. (Some mailers do this automatically.) In Internet
    parlance, this is known as a ".sig" or "signature" file. Your
    .sig file takes the place of your business card. (And you can
    have more than one to apply in different circumstances.)

  - Be careful when addressing mail. There are addresses which
    may go to a group but the address looks like it is just one
    person. Know to whom you are sending.

  - Watch cc's when replying. Don't continue to include
    people if the messages have become a 2-way conversation.

  - In general, most people who use the Internet don't have time
    to answer general questions about the Internet and its workings.
    Don't send unsolicited mail asking for information to people
    whose names you might have seen in RFCs or on mailing lists.

  - Remember that people with whom you communicate are located across
    the globe. If you send a message to which you want an immediate
    response, the person receiving it might be at home asleep when it
    arrives. Give them a chance to wake up, come to work, and login
    before assuming the mail didn't arrive or that they don't care.

  - Verify all addresses before initiating long or personal discourse.
    It's also a good practice to include the word "Long" in the
    subject header so the recipient knows the message will take time
    to read and respond to. Over 100 lines is considered "long".

- Know whom to contact for help. Usually you will have resources
  close at hand. Check locally for people who can help you with
  software and system problems. Also, know whom to go to if you
  receive anything questionable or illegal. Most sites also
  have "Postmaster" aliased to a knowledgeable user, so you
  can send mail to this address to get help with mail.

- Remember that the recipient is a human being whose culture,
  language, and humor have different points of reference from your
  own. Remember that date formats, measurements, and idioms may
  not travel well.   Be especially careful with sarcasm.

- Use mixed case. UPPER CASE LOOKS AS IF YOU'RE SHOUTING.

- Use symbols for emphasis. That *is* what I meant. Use
  underscores for underlining. _War and Peace_ is my favorite
  book.

- Use smileys to indicate tone of voice, but use them sparingly.
  :-) is an example of a smiley (Look sideways). Don't assume
  that the inclusion of a smiley will make the recipient happy
  with what you say or wipe out an otherwise insulting comment.

- Wait overnight to send emotional responses to messages. If you
  have really strong feelings about a subject, indicate it via
  FLAME ON/OFF enclosures. For example:
  FLAME ON: This type of argument is not worth the bandwidth
             it takes to send it. It's illogical and poorly
             reasoned. The rest of the world agrees with me.
  FLAME OFF

- Do not include control characters or non-ASCII attachments in
  messages unless they are MIME attachments or unless your mailer
  encodes these. If you send encoded messages make sure the
  recipient can decode them.

- Be brief without being overly terse. When replying to a message,
  include enough original material to be understood but no more. It
  is extremely bad form to simply reply to a message by including
  all the previous message: edit out all the irrelevant material.

- Limit line length to fewer than 65 characters and end a line
  with a carriage return.

- Mail should have a subject heading which reflects
  the content of the message.

- If you include a signature keep it short. Rule of thumb
  is no longer than 4 lines. Remember that many people pay for
  connectivity by the minute, and the longer your message is,
  the more they pay.

- Just as mail (today) may not be private, mail (and news) are
  (today) subject to forgery and spoofing of various degrees of
  detectability. Apply common sense "reality checks" before
  assuming a message is valid.

- If you think the importance of a message justifies it, immediately
  reply briefly to an e-mail message to let the sender know you got
  it, even if you will send a longer reply later.

- "Reasonable" expectations for conduct via e-mail depend on your
  relationship to a person and the context of the communication.
  Norms learned in a particular e-mail environment may not apply in
  general to your e-mail communication with people across the
  Internet. Be careful with slang or local acronyms.

- The cost of delivering an e-mail message is, on the average, paid
  about equally by the sender and the recipient (or their
  organizations). This is unlike other media such as physical mail,
  telephone, TV, or radio. Sending someone mail may also cost them
  in other specific ways like network bandwidth, disk space or CPU
  usage. This is a fundamental economic reason why unsolicited
  e-mail advertising is unwelcome (and is forbidden in many contexts).

- Know how large a message you are sending. Including large files
  such as Postscript files or programs may make your message so
  large that it cannot be delivered or at least consumes excessive
  resources. A good rule of thumb would be not to send a file
  larger than 50 Kilobytes. Consider file transfer as an
  alternative, or cutting the file into smaller chunks and sending
  each as a separate message.

- Don't send large amounts of unsolicited information to people.

- If your mail system allows you to forward mail, beware the dreaded
  forwarding loop. Be sure you haven't set up forwarding on several
  hosts so that a message sent to you gets into an endless loop from
  one computer to the next to the next.

2.1.2 For talk:

   Talk is a set of protocols which allow two people to have an
   interactive dialogue via computer.

     - Use mixed case and proper punctuation, as though you were typing
       a letter or sending mail.

     - Don't run off the end of a line and simply let the terminal wrap;
       use a Carriage Return (CR) at the end of the line. Also, don't
       assume your screen size is the same as everyone else's. A good
       rule of thumb is to write out no more than 70 characters, and no
       more than 12 lines (since you're using a split screen).

     - Leave some margin; don't write to the edge of the screen.

     - Use two CRs to indicate that you are done and the other person may
       start typing. (blank line).

     - Always say goodbye, or some other farewell, and wait to see a
       farewell from the other person before killing the session. This
       is especially important when you are communicating with someone
       a long way away. Remember that your communication relies on both
       bandwidth (the size of the pipe) and latency (the speed of light).

     - Remember that talk is an interruption to the other person. Only
       use as appropriate. And never talk to strangers.

     - The reasons for not getting a reply are many. Don't assume
       that everything is working correctly. Not all versions of
       talk are compatible.

     - If left on its own, talk re-rings the recipient. Let it ring
       one or two times, then kill it.

     - If a person doesn't respond you might try another tty. Use finger
       to determine which are open. If the person still doesn't respond,
       do not continue to send.

     - Talk shows your typing ability. If you type slowly and make
       mistakes when typing it is often not worth the time of trying to
       correct, as the other person can usually see what you meant.

    - Be careful if you have more than one talk session going!

2.2 Administrator Issues

   - Be sure you have established written guidelines for dealing
     with situations especially illegal, improper, or forged
     traffic.

   - Handle requests in a timely fashion - by the next business day.

   - Respond promptly to people who have concerns about receiving
     improper or illegal messages.   Requests concerning chain
     letters should be handled immediately.

   - Explain any system rules, such as disk quotas, to your users.
     Make sure they understand implications of requesting files by
     mail such as: Filling up disks; running up phone bills, delaying
     mail, etc.

   - Make sure you have "Postmaster" aliased. Make sure you have
     "Root" aliased. Make sure someone reads that mail.

   - Investigate complaints about your users with an open mind.
     Remember that addresses may be forged and spoofed.

3.0 One-to-Many Communication (Mailing Lists, NetNews)

   Any time you engage in One-to-Many communications, all the rules for
   mail should also apply. After all, communicating with many people
   via one mail message or post is quite analogous to communicating with
   one person with the exception of possibly offending a great many more
   people than in one-to-one communication. Therefore, it's quite
   important to know as much as you can about the audience of your
   message.

3.1 User Guidelines

3.1.1 General Guidelines for mailing lists and NetNews

   - Read both mailing lists and newsgroups for one to two months before
     you post anything. This helps you to get an understanding of
     the culture of the group.

   - Do not blame the system administrator for the behavior of the
     system users.

   - Consider that a large audience will see your posts.
     That may include your present or your next boss. Take
     care in what you write. Remember too, that mailing lists and
     Newsgroups are frequently archived, and that your words may be

     stored for a very long time in a place to which many people have
     access.

   - Assume that individuals speak for themselves, and what they
     say does not represent their organization (unless stated
     explicitly).

   - Remember that both mail and news take system resources. Pay
     attention to any specific rules covering their uses your
     organization may have.

   - Messages and articles should be brief and to the point. Don't
     wander off-topic, don't ramble and don't send mail or post
     messages solely to point out other people's errors in typing
     or spelling. These, more than any other behavior, mark you
     as an immature beginner.

   - Subject lines should follow the conventions of the group.

   - Forgeries and spoofing are not approved behavior.

   - Advertising is welcomed on some lists and Newsgroups, and abhorred
     on others! This is another example of knowing your audience
     before you post. Unsolicited advertising which is completely
     off-topic will most certainly guarantee that you get a lot of
     hate mail.

   - If you are sending a reply to a message or a posting be sure you
     summarize the original at the top of the message, or include just
     enough text of the original to give a context. This will make
     sure readers understand when they start to read your response.
     Since NetNews, especially, is proliferated by distributing the
     postings from one host to another, it is possible to see a
     response to a message before seeing the original. Giving context
     helps everyone. But do not include the entire original!

   - Again, be sure to have a signature which you attach to your
     message. This will guarantee that any peculiarities of mailers or
     newsreaders which strip header information will not delete the
     only reference in the message of how people may reach you.

   - Be careful when you reply to messages or postings. Frequently
     replies are sent back to the address which originated the post -
     which in many cases is the address of a list or group! You may
     accidentally send a personal response to a great many people,
     embarrassing all involved. It's best to type in the address
     instead of relying on "reply."

     - Delivery receipts, non-delivery notices, and vacation programs
       are neither totally standardized nor totally reliable across the
       range of systems connected to Internet mail. They are invasive
       when sent to mailing lists, and some people consider delivery
       receipts an invasion of privacy. In short, do not use them.

      - If you find a personal message has gone to a list or group, send
        an apology to the person and to the group.

      - If you should find yourself in a disagreement with one person,
        make your responses to each other via mail rather than continue to
        send messages to the list or the group. If you are debating a
        point on which the group might have some interest, you may
        summarize for them later.

     - Don't get involved in flame wars. Neither post nor respond
       to incendiary material.

     - Avoid sending messages or posting articles which are no more than
       gratuitous replies to replies.

     - Be careful with monospacing fonts and diagrams. These will
       display differently on different systems, and with different
       mailers on the same system.

     - There are Newsgroups and Mailing Lists which discuss topics
       of wide varieties of interests. These represent a diversity of
       lifestyles, religions, and cultures. Posting articles or sending
       messages to a group whose point of view is offensive to you
       simply to tell them they are offensive is not acceptable.
       Sexually and racially harassing messages may also have legal
       implications. There is software available to filter items
       you might find objectionable.

3.1.2 Mailing List Guidelines

  There are several ways to find information about what mailing lists
  exist on the Internet and how to join them. Make sure you understand
  your organization's policy about joining these lists and posting to
  them. In general it is always better to check local resources first
  before trying to find information via the Internet. Nevertheless,
  there are a set of files posted periodically to news.answers which
  list the Internet mailing lists and how to subscribe to them. This
  is an invaluable resource for finding lists on any topic. See also
  references [9,13,15] in the Selected Bibliography.

   - Send subscribe and unsubscribe messages to the appropriate
     address. Although some mailing list software is smart enough

     to catch these, not all can ferret these out. It is your
     responsibility to learn how the lists work, and to send the
     correct mail to the correct place. Although many many mailing
     lists adhere to the convention of having a "-request" alias for
     sending subscribe and unsubscribe messages, not all do. Be sure
     you know the conventions used by the lists to which you subscribe.

  - Save the subscription messages for any lists you join. These
    usually tell you how to unsubscribe as well.

  - In general, it's not possible to retrieve messages once you have
    sent them. Even your system administrator will not be able to get
    a message back once you have sent it. This means you must make
    sure you really want the message to go as you have written it.

  - The auto-reply feature of many mailers is useful for in-house
    communication, but quite annoying when sent to entire mailing
    lists. Examine "Reply-To" addresses when replying to messages
    from lists. Most auto-replys will go to all members of the
    list.

  - Don't send large files to mailing lists when Uniform
    Resource Locators (URLs) or pointers to ftp-able versions
    will do. If you want to send it as multiple files, be
    sure to follow the culture of the group. If you don't
    know what that is, ask.

  - Consider unsubscribing or setting a "nomail" option (when it's
    available) when you cannot check your mail for an extended
    period.

  - When sending a message to more than one mailing list, especially
    if the lists are closely related, apologize for cross-posting.

  - If you ask a question, be sure to post a summary. When doing so,
    truly summarize rather than send a cumulation of the messages you
    receive.

  - Some mailing lists are private. Do not send mail to these lists
    uninvited. Do not report mail from these lists to a wider
    audience.

  - If you are caught in an argument, keep the discussion focused on
    issues rather than the personalities involved.

3.1.3 NetNews Guidelines

   NetNews is a globally distributed system which allows people to
   communicate on topics of specific interest. It is divided into
   hierarchies, with the major divisions being: sci - science related
   discussions; comp - computer related discussions; news - for
   discussions which center around NetNews itself; rec - recreational
   activities; soc - social issues; talk - long-winded never-ending
   discussions; biz - business related postings; and alt - the alternate
   hierarchy. Alt is so named because creating an alt group does not go
   through the same process as creating a group in the other parts of
   the hierarchy. There are also regional hierarchies, hierarchies
   which are widely distributed such as Bionet, and your place of
   business may have its own groups as well. Recently, a "humanities"
   hierarchy was added, and as time goes on its likely more will be
   added. For longer discussions on News see references [2,8,22,23] in
   the Selected Bibliography.

     - In NetNews parlance, "Posting" refers to posting a new article
       to a group, or responding to a post someone else has posted.
       "Cross-Posting" refers to posting a message to more than one
       group. If you introduce Cross-Posting to a group, or if you
       direct "Followup-To:" in the header of your posting, warn
       readers! Readers will usually assume that the message was
       posted to a specific group and that followups will go to
       that group. Headers change this behavior.

     - Read all of a discussion in progress (we call this a thread)
       before posting replies. Avoid posting "Me Too" messages,
       where content is limited to agreement with previous posts.
       Content of a follow-up post should exceed quoted content.

     - Send mail when an answer to a question is for one person only.
       Remember that News has global distribution and the whole world
       probably is NOT interested in a personal response. However, don't
       hesitate to post when something will be of general interest to the
       Newsgroup participants.

     - Check the "Distribution" section of the header, but don't
       depend on it. Due to the complex method by which News is
       delivered, Distribution headers are unreliable. But, if you
       are posting something which will be of interest to a limited
       number or readers, use a distribution line that attempts to
       limit the distribution of your article to those people. For
       example, set the Distribution to be "nj" if you are posting
       an article that will be of interest only to New Jersey readers.

- If you feel an article will be of interest to more than one
  Newsgroup, be sure to CROSSPOST the article rather than individually
  post it to those groups. In general, probably only five-to-six
  groups will have similar enough interests to warrant this.

- Consider using Reference sources (Computer Manuals, Newspapers,
  help files) before posting a question. Asking a Newsgroup where
  answers are readily available elsewhere generates grumpy "RTFM"
  (read the fine manual - although a more vulgar meaning of the
  word beginning with "f" is usually implied) messages.

- Although there are Newsgroups which welcome advertising,
  in general it is considered nothing less than criminal
  to advertise off-topic products. Sending an advertisement
  to each and every group will pretty much guarantee your loss of
  connectivity.

- If you discover an error in your post, cancel it as soon as
  possible.

- DO NOT attempt to cancel any articles but your own. Contact
  your administrator if you don't know how to cancel your post,
  or if some other post, such as a chain letter, needs canceling.

- If you've posted something and don't see it immediately,
  don't assume it's failed and re-post it.

- Some groups permit (and some welcome) posts which in other
  circumstances would be considered to be in questionable taste.
  Still, there is no guarantee that all people reading the group
  will appreciate the material as much as you do. Use the Rotate
  utility (which rotates all the characters in your post by 13
  positions in the alphabet) to avoid giving offense.   The
  Rot13 utility for Unix is an example.

- In groups which discuss movies or books it is considered essential
  to mark posts which disclose significant content as "Spoilers".
  Put this word in your Subject: line. You may add blank lines to
  the beginning of your post to keep content out of sight, or you
  may Rotate it.

- Forging of news articles is generally censured. You can protect
  yourself from forgeries by using software which generates a
  manipulation detection "fingerprint", such as PGP (in the US).

- Postings via anonymous servers are accepted in some Newsgroups
  and disliked in others. Material which is inappropriate when
  posted under one's own name is still inappropriate when posted

     anonymously.

   - Expect a slight delay in seeing your post when posting to a
     moderated group. The moderator may change your subject
     line to have your post conform to a particular thread.

   - Don't get involved in flame wars. Neither post nor respond
     to incendiary material.

3.2   Administrator Guidelines

3.2.1 General Issues

   - Clarify any policies your site has regarding its subscription
     to NetNews groups and about subscribing to mailing lists.

   - Clarify any policies your site has about posting to NetNews
     groups or to mailing lists, including use of disclaimers in .sigs.

   - Clarify and publicize archive policy. (How long are articles
     kept?)

   - Investigate accusations about your users promptly and with an
     open mind.

   - Be sure to monitor the health of your system.

   - Consider how long to archive system logs, and publicize your
     policy on logging.

3.2.2 Mailing Lists

   - Keep mailing lists up to date to avoid the "bouncing mail" problem.

   - Help list owners when problems arise.

   - Inform list owners of any maintenance windows or planned downtime.

   - Be sure to have "-request" aliases for list subscription and
     administration.

   - Make sure all mail gateways operate smoothly.

3.2.3. NetNews

   - Publicize the nature of the feed you receive. If you do not get
     a full feed, people may want to know why not.

     - Be aware that the multiplicity of News Reader clients may cause
       the News Server being blamed for problems in the clients.

     - Honor requests from users immediately if they request cancellation
       of their own posts or invalid posts, such as chain letters.

     - Have "Usenet", "Netnews" and "News" aliased and make sure someone
       reads the mail.

3.3 Moderator Guidelines

3.3.1 General Guidelines

     - Make sure your Frequestly Asked Questions (FAQ) is posted at
       regular intervals. Include your guidelines for articles/messages.
       If you are not the FAQ maintainer, make sure they do so.

     - Make sure you maintain a good welcome message, which contains
       subscribe and unsubscribe information.

     - Newsgroups should have their charter/guidelines posted
       regularly.

     - Keep mailing lists and Newsgroups up to date. Post
       messages in a timely fashion. Designate a substitute
       when you go on vacation or out of town.

4.0 Information Services (Gopher, Wais, WWW, ftp, telnet)

   In recent Internet history, the 'Net has exploded with new and varied
   Information services. Gopher, Wais, World Wide Web (WWW), Multi-User
   Dimensions (MUDs) Multi-User Dimensions which are Object Oriented
   (MOOs) are a few of these new areas. Although the ability to find
   information is exploding, "Caveat Emptor" remains constant. For more
   information on these services, check references [14,28] in the
   Selected Bibliography.

4.1 User Guidelines

4.1.1. General guidelines

     - Remember that all these services belong to someone else. The
       people who pay the bills get to make the rules governing usage.
       Information may be free - or it may not be! Be sure you check.

     - If you have problems with any form of information service, start
       problem solving by checking locally: Check file configurations,
       software setup, network connections, etc. Do this before assuming

     the problem is at the provider's end and/or is the provider's
     fault.

   - Although there are naming conventions for file-types used, don't
     depend on these file naming conventions to be enforced. For
     example, a ".doc" file is not always a Word file.

   - Information services also use conventions, such as www.xyz.com.
     While it is useful to know these conventions, again, don't
     necessarily rely on them.

   - Know how file names work on your own system.

   - Be aware of conventions used for providing information during
     sessions. FTP sites usually have files named README in a top
     level directory which have information about the files available.
     But, don't assume that these files are necessarily up-to-date
     and/or accurate.

   - Do NOT assume that ANY information you find is up-to-date and/or
     accurate. Remember that new technologies allow just about anyone
     to be a publisher, but not all people have discovered the
     responsibilities which accompany publishing.

   - Remember that unless you are sure that security and authentication
     technology is in use, that any information you submit to a system
     is being transmitted over the Internet "in the clear", with no
     protection from "sniffers" or forgers.

   - Since the Internet spans the globe, remember that Information
     Services might reflect culture and life-style markedly different
     from your own community. Materials you find offensive may
     originate in a geography which finds them acceptable. Keep an open
     mind.

   - When wanting information from a popular server, be sure to use
     a mirror server that's close if a list is provided.

   - Do not use someone else's FTP site to deposit materials you
     wish other people to pick up. This is called "dumping" and
     is not generally acceptable behavior.

   - When you have trouble with a site and ask for help, be sure to
     provide as much information as possible in order to help
     debug the problem.

   - When bringing up your own information service, such as a homepage,
     be sure to check with your local system administrator to find what
     the local guidelines are in affect.

   - Consider spreading out the system load on popular sites by
     avoiding "rush hour" and logging in during off-peak times.

4.1.2 Real Time Interactive Services Guidelines (MUDs MOOs IRC)

   - As in other environments, it is wise to "listen" first to
     get to know the culture of the group.

   - It's not necessary to greet everyone on a channel or room
     personally. Usually one "Hello" or the equivalent is enough.
     Using the automation features of your client to greet people is
     not acceptable behavior.

   - Warn the participants if you intend to ship large quantities
     of information. If all consent to receiving it, you may send,
     but sending unwanted information without a warning is considered
     bad form just as it is in mail.

   - Don't assume that people who you don't know will want to talk to
     you. If you feel compelled to send private messages to people you
     don't know, then be willing to accept gracefully the fact that they
     might be busy or simply not want to chat with you.

   - Respect the guidelines of the group. Look for introductory
     materials for the group. These may be on a related ftp site.

   - Don't badger other users for personal information such as sex, age,
     or location. After you have built an acquaintance with another user,
     these questions may be more appropriate, but many people
     hesitate to give this information to people with whom they are
     not familiar.

   - If a user is using a nickname alias or pseudonym, respect that
     user's desire for anonymity. Even if you and that person are
     close friends, it is more courteous to use his nickname. Do
     not use that person's real name online without permission.

4.2 Administrator Guidelines

4.2.1 General Guidelines

   - Make clear what's available for copying and what is not.

   - Describe what's available on your site, and your organization.
     Be sure any general policies are clear.

   - Keep information, especially READMEs, up-to-date. Provide READMEs
     in plain ascii text.

   - Present a list of mirrors of your site if you know them. Make
     sure you include a statement of copyright applicable to your
     mirrors. List their update schedule if possible.

   - Make sure that popular (and massive) information has the bandwidth
     to support it.

   - Use conventions for file extensions - .txt for ascii text; .html
     or .htm for HTML; .ps for Postscript; .pdf for Portable Document
     Format; .sgml or .sgm for SGML; .exe for non-Unix executables, etc.

   - For files being transferred, try to make filenames unique in the
     first eight characters.

   - When providing information, make sure your site has something
     unique to offer. Avoid bringing up an information service which
     simply points to other services on the Internet.

   - Don't point to other sites without asking first.

   - Remember that setting up an information service is more than just
     design and implementation. It's also maintenance.

   - Make sure your posted materials are appropriate for the supporting
     organization.

   - Test applications with a variety of tools. Don't assume everything
     works if you've tested with only one client. Also, assume the low
     end of technology for clients and don't create applications which
     can only be used by Graphical User Interfaces.

   - Have a consistent view of your information. Make sure the look
     and feel stays the same throughout your applications.

- Be sensitive to the longevity of your information. Be sure to
  date time-sensitive materials, and be vigilant about keeping
  this information well maintained.

- Export restrictions vary from country to country. Be sure you
  understand the implications of export restrictions when you post.

- Tell users what you plan to do with any information you collect,
  such as WWW feedback. You need to warn people if you plan to
  publish any of their statements, even passively by just making it
  available to other users.

- Make sure your policy on user information services, such as
  homepages, is well known.

5.0 Selected Bibliography

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   sections above as well as for general reference. Items not
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6.0 Security Considerations

   Security issues are not discussed in this memo.

7.0 Author's Address

   Sally Hambridge
   Intel Corporation
   2880 Northwestern Parkway
   SC3-15
   Santa Clara, CA   95052

   Phone: 408-765-2931
   Fax: 408-765-3679
   EMail: sallyh@ludwig.sc.intel.com