USING COMPUTERS CRITICALLY
USING ELECTRONIC MAIL

Composing Messages

- Think about the readers listed in the To or Recipient field
- Describe the content of your message in the Subject field
- Use attachments to share your work and to respond to the writing of others
- Pitch the content and tone of your message to your audience

Responding to messages

- Check that the response addresses the appropriate person or people.
- Check that the reply has an appropriate subject heading
- Use quoted material from earlier messages critically

Observing netiquette

- Avoid spamming
- Avoid frivolous messages
- Don’t say or do anything you wouldn’t say or do face to face
- Pay careful attention to tone
- Forward messages only with permission
Principles of Document Design

• **Create flow** to conduct the reader through the document
• **Space elements** to give the reader’s eye a rest and to focus the reader’s attention
• **Group related elements** in lists or under similar headings
• **Emphasize** important elements
• **Standardize** elements
CREATING ONLINE PAPERS

- Use a white or cream-colored background for pages.
  - No bright or dark background colors.
- Use a standard type font and size for text.
  - At least 12 points
- Use a maximum line length of seventy or eighty characters.
  - You may have to increase the margins for shorter lines.
- Use headings as signposts in documents that require scrolling through several screens.
  - Without these headings, readers may lose track of the overall organization.
DEVELOPING STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

- Sketch possible site plans before getting started. (See p. 221.)
- As you conceive the organization of your site, consider how menus on the site’s pages can provide overviews of the organization as well as direct access to the pages. (See pp. 226-27.)
- Treat the first few sentences of any page as a get-acquainted space for you and your readers.
- Compose descriptive links.
- Distill your text so that it includes only essential information.
**DISCUSSION BOARD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet Identity</th>
<th>Ling, Sara</th>
<th>02-Nov-1999</th>
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<tr>
<td>Re: Internet Identity</td>
<td>Riggins, Bob</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re: Internet Identity</td>
<td>Potter, Franklin</td>
<td>02-Nov-1999</td>
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**Author:** Ling, Sara &lt;slings@cncu.edu&gt;  
**Subject:** Internet Identity

Hi everyone. I'm hoping you can give me some advice about my topic and maybe share some of your experiences. I disagree with Kadi's argument that the Internet will lead to more fragmentation, not community. On the snowboarding forum that I sometimes participate in, I received a lot of hostile responses when I logged on as a woman. But another member of the group wrote to tell me that when she logged on as a man, she was welcomed into the group. It made me realize that the anonymity of the Internet could be used to bring people together, not split them apart.

Have any of you had similar experiences when you've been online? Do you think that anonymity can bring people together?

**Author:** Riggins, Bob &lt;flashbob@cncu.edu&gt;  
**Subject:** Re: Internet Identity

I had a similar experience when I tried to post a question to a newsgroup. I logged on with my e-mail account as my name, "flashbob." Nobody responded to my question at all. I think part of it was because the name I used was so playful that nobody took me seriously. You may be on to something, Sara.

**Author:** Potter, Franklin &lt;fpotter@cncu.edu&gt;  
**Subject:** Re: Internet Identity

I think you and Bob both have a point about the names used on the Internet having a lot to do with how people relate. But I'm not sure that your experience totally challenges what Kadi is saying. When I've been online, I've found that people who are a lot alike tend to hang out and encourage each other. Even if the other woman on the snowboarding forum was able to change her identity, she still ended up confiding in you. I guess I would just be careful about claiming that anonymity will automatically bring different kinds of people together. Hope this helps. Frank.