

✓ Checklist: Email

(These criteria are discussed on pages 349–50.)

Netiquette

- Do you check and answer your email daily?
- Have you reviewed your distribution list before mailing?
- Is each recipient's name spelled correctly?
- Have you chosen an alternative medium for any formal correspondence?

Ethical, Legal, and Interpersonal Considerations

- Have you avoided writing anything incriminating?
- Have wisecracks and flaming been avoided?
- Have you avoided sending confidential information?
- Are you keeping personal correspondence out of the workplace network?
- Before forwarding a message, have you obtained the sender's permission?
- Is email the most appropriate medium in this situation?

Readability

- Is there an explicit subject line?
- Do you refer clearly to the message to which you are responding?
- Are sentences and paragraphs short?
- Do you avoid paragraph indentations and FULL CAPS?
- Are graphic highlights used as needed to improve readability?
- Are formal salutations and closings used, when appropriate?
- Are smiley faces and abbreviations used sparingly?
- Before sending a long attachment, have you checked with the recipient?
- Have you included a signature block?
- Have you proofread carefully?

Instant Messaging

A faster medium than email, instant messaging (IM) allows for text-based conversation in real time: The user types a message in a pop-up box and the recipient can respond instantly. IM groupware enables multiple users to converse and collaborate from various locations. According to *Fortune* magazine, “instant messaging is rising fast in corporate America,” rapidly displacing email for routine communication (Varchaver 102). Although it is useful for brief, rapid exchanges, IM is not a good medium for the kind of written communication that requires careful planning, composing, and editing.

The limitations of instant messaging