

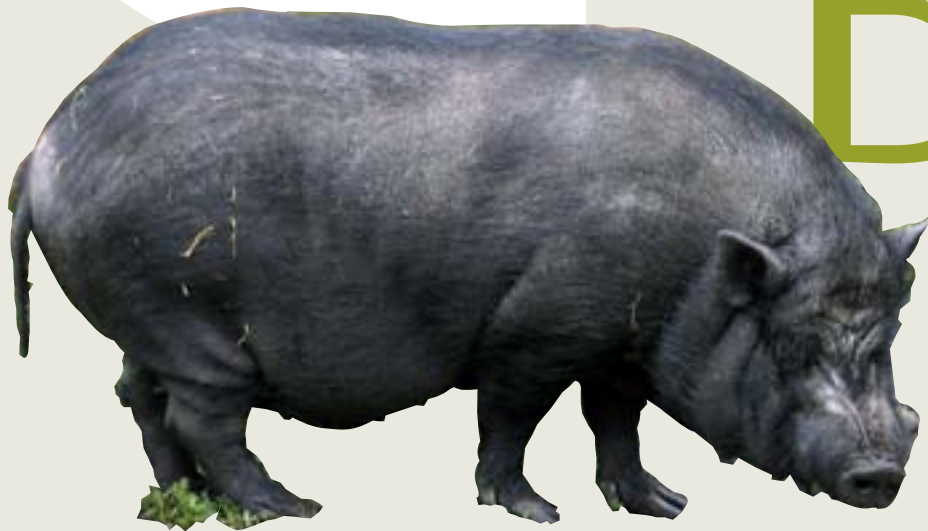
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# How to be a Boor

**NINE THINGS EVERYONE YOU KNOW  
SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EMAIL**



by Elly Markson

\*We know this is a boar, not a boor. But it's a better picture, isn't it?

Since we were kids, people were very clear with us on a few important points of etiquette: Don't talk with your mouth full. Don't refuse to shake hands with someone. Don't say, "I hate it" when someone gives you a present. And never, ever talk about maggots during dinner.

Alas, your parents knew squat about email when you were growing up. They didn't hector and hassle and harass you every time you blind CCed a friend on a catty flame you sent to that girl who doesn't like you as much as she said she did. So no one taught you the stuff you will now learn. You can thank me later.

Actually, I'll thank me later. I get more than 200 emails a day, and if everyone reads this (and why shouldn't they!) my life will be better. So thank you.

Read it, memorize it, send it to ten friends.

# 1

## DON'T TYPE IN ALL CAPS.

**FORTUNATELY, THIS PROBLEM SEEMS TO BE DIMINISHING, BUT IT REALLY AND TRULY MAKES IT LOOK AS THOUGH YOU'RE YELLING. IT'S GOTTEN TO THE POINT THAT WHEN I SEE ALL CAPS IN AN EMAIL I JUST DELETE IT, AND WHEN I SEE ALL CAPS ON THE WARNING STICKER IN AN AIRPLANE BATHROOM I GET ALL ITCHY.**

# 2

## Don't forward jokes or notes about viruses.

Especially avoid forwarding urban legends. Consider these two examples:

- The delete virus
- The Google Jew note

So, just to be clear here: if you get a joke or a warning or something about a petition or a virus by email, check it out thoroughly before you forward it. Way easier than apologizing later. The only exception is this PDF, which is fine to forward.

### 3

## You don't have to have the last word.

If someone asks you for something, it's okay for them to email you a note that says, "Thanks." It is not okay for you to email back, "You're welcome."

### 4

## Don't string all your sentences together.

Use carriage returns. They're free. A well-spaced note, larded with white space, is a joy to read.

### 5

## Don't be so demanding!

Just because you're not used to the medium doesn't mean you should get all stiff or serious. Don't be more officious or formal or bossy than you'd be on the phone. Thank you.

## 6

### Don't send email to everyone in the company,

to everyone in your address list or to everyone in a club. Unless you're sure. Totally sure. Think two or three times about this and be really sure.

## 7

### You're not as funny as me.

Okay, I'm not that funny either, which makes it worse. Sending me a joke (or sending your friend Bob a joke) can get old, especially if Bob and I have read your joke six times already today.

## 8

### This is the most important rule of all.

I saved it for the end so I could put it in bold without wrecking the flow of the layout:

**Never ever ever buy anything at all (nothing, no matter how terrific) that you found out about from a piece of spam. Don't buy Viagra, don't buy insurance, don't buy those cute little RC race cars. Don't!**

It's this simple: If no one bought anything, clicked anything or forwarded anything that came in a spam, spam would go away. It would take two weeks and then it would be gone.

## 9

### **BONUS RULE:**

## Your email has three lines: TO, CC and BCC.

For those of you less than 40 years old, CC stands for carbon copy. Never mind. What you need to know is that CC will send a copy of your note to the person you list in the CC line. It will also alert the person you really sent it to you that you sent a copy to someone else.

Confused? Don't be. It means if you send a note to Sarah and CC Tracy, then Sarah will see that Tracy got a copy.

This is really useful and efficient. It allows more people to participate in conversations. You can even CC two or three or six other people.

The BCC line is just like the CC line, except that the people on this line are secret! The other recipients have no idea that the BCC people are reading along. This is usually a nefarious, evil thing to do, something that's going to get you burned, you mark my words.

How? Well, what happens when Tracy accidentally mentions to Sarah that she knows that Sarah is having a torrid affair because she got to see it as a BCC in a letter you wrote to Sarah? You're in big trouble, aintcha?

Here are the two things I want you to remember about the CC and BCC lines:

- A. If you get a note with someone CCed, the right thing to do is hit REPLY ALL when you write back. That way, the third person gets to keep up with the conversation.
- B. The only time it's a good idea to use the BCC line is this: when you're sending an announcement to a whole bunch of people. Like, "You're invited to a barbecue at my house," or "Don't forget to vote on Tuesday!"

Why should you BCC this? Because it prevents people from seeing your whole address list. Because it means that if some idiot, some dolt, some twit who hasn't read this handy tip-sheet decides to hit REPLY ALL, it won't automatically go to fifty people who couldn't care a whit about what he's bringing to your barbecue.

Thank you for your attention. Good day.

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## **ABOUT THIS AUTHOR**

Elly Markson has had a long and successful career as a style-setter. Whether it's clothing, language or dance, Markson is often on the forefront of defining the next big thing. His fresh and uncompromising look at what matters never fails to sync with popular culture. He lives in Toronto.

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## BORN ON DATE

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