

# Information Technology

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## Electronic Etiquette In and Out of the Classroom: Do's and Don'ts

Adapted from Bob Lang's "Proper Business Etiquette for Using Electronic Communicating Devices" and Greg Wright's "Electronic Etiquette"

Civility and etiquette, it seems, have taken a back seat to an unquenchable desire for constant and immediate information.



**Cell phones:** They have power buttons for a reason. Users should turn them off in a classroom or a seminar. Invest in voice mail and caller ID options so that you can practice good etiquette. If you have to have your phone on for emergency reasons, it is best to tell the instructor ahead of time and to put it on 'silent' or 'vibrate' mode.

**Texting:** Texting has become a very inappropriate norm in our society today. Just because you are not speaking aloud on your cell phone does not make this task any less annoying, rude, or disrespectful to those around you. So, all you texters out there who think you are being conspicuous-you're not! Everyone can see you and interprets your lack of attention as dismissive of their time. It is recommended to not text, unless it is an emergency or you are using your phone to take notes; in which case should be clarified beforehand.

**Pagers:** Same interpersonal guidelines as a cell phone. Turn it off or wear it in the 'vibrate' mode. No one ever has to know you're being paged but you.

**Voice mail:** Begin with your name & phone number, and speak slowly. Limit yourself to a one-minute message. Remember you never know who could be calling you (your mother, boss, minister), so refrain from inappropriate messages and music on your voice mail.



**E-Mail:** The subject line should be short and relevant. Include the purpose and the topic. Example: "Office Picnic" becomes "Rain date for office picnic" If the reader has to scroll down while reading your message, it's probably too long.

**Warning!!!!** Do not automatically carbon copy emails or use the "Reply to All" email command (which sends a response to everyone who was sent the original message) – some people become confused about receiving an email that doesn't directly relate to them.

Refrain from writing in **BOLD &/OR ALL CAPITALS** - it can be interpreted into the equivalent of shouting at someone.



**Laptops and Hand-Held Computers:** It is not considered rude to use these devices, as long as they are not disruptive and have been approved ahead of time for use in meetings and classrooms; the use of these devices depends on the participants. Consult with instructors before note-taking with a laptop. Using pen and paper in small meetings makes you appear more willing to participate.

**Fax machines:** Never send a private message to an office via fax. It's like a postcard; everyone will have a chance to read it. Sending jokes is also a bad idea.

**Speaker phones:** Only use these devices for conference calls when there's more than one person on your end & you are in a closed room where others cannot overhear your conversation.

Information Technology  
[iueitsup@indiana.edu](mailto:iueitsup@indiana.edu)  
765-973-8375