Why do we Communicate?

- To convey information
- To clarify instructions
- To request actions
- To record events
- To verify arrangements
Communication Modes

- Professional Email
- Telephone Conversations
- Business Letters
  - Cover letters
  - Submittal letters
  - “Thank You” letters
- Technical Reports
Why you need to Communicate Well

• A large majority of engineering work is dependent upon communications.
• You need to have your ideas, designs and information relayed and understood efficiently and correctly.
• You & your work will be judged on how well you communicate.
Business Email

It isn’t IM or a chat room
What defines a Good Business Email Message?

A good business email is one that can clearly and effectively deliver your intention, meaning, background/or reason … without ambiguity.
Business Email Purpose

Be Clear! Be Concise! Be Correct!
Business Email Content

• It’s professional communication
  - It’s not the same as talking in a chat room or informally with friends

• It’s professional writing
  - Shorter
  - Less formal (but not informal)
  - It can make-or-break all else you do

• Keep it simple!!
Business Email Content

"To be understood by another person, one must not authorize validity to the very prospect of invalidation which has the potential to assume its own assumption of deficiency within the very milieu of the message. That is the key to clear and effective communication!"

Not concise or simple or coherent!!
Business Email as Writing

Why are good business writing skills important?

1. Employers may see your writing more than they see you.

2. Good writing skills show that you really care.

3. Good writing skills contribute more forcefully to arguments/persuasion/selling.

4. Good writing skills reduce risk of damaging a relationship and fosters good relationships with employers.
Four Parts of Business Email

The Opening  tells the reader why you are writing

The Focus  tells the details about the topic

The Action  tells what you want to happen and gives a time frame

The Closing  thank the reader and mention future communication
Four Parts of Business Email

This is the subject of the original email and the outcome we’re after – finding the right person to talk to.

This is your clear, simple, request for a time to talk.

This is why you’re emailing them.

Re: Appropriate person?

[Name],

I’m writing to follow-up on my email. I didn’t hear back from anyone on the team. If it makes sense to talk, let me know how your calendar looks.

If not, who is the appropriate person for me to talk to?

Thanks for your help,

[Signature]

Your objective is to hear back from someone

This is where you request they delegate to someone else.
Example of a Good Email

Kissoff, Nicholas V

From: Tim Mott
Sent: Wednesday, September 06, 2006 4:28 PM
To: Kissoff, Nicholas V
Subject: Class Tonight

Professor Kissoff,

I am a student in your M-W evening Engineering Economics course.

I apologize for the last minute notice, but I will not be attending class tonight because my wife gave birth to our daughter earlier this week. I want to stay home with her and my two sons so I can watch the boys and she can get some rest.

I would appreciate it if you send me any homework assignment that you give tonight so I can keep pace with the class.

I plan to return to school next Monday - so barring any unforeseen happenings, I will not miss any future classes.

Thank you for your time.

Tim Mott
Tone

- Avoid terseness or sarcasm, which can be misinterpreted
- Use face-to-face communication if issue is sensitive
- Read your emails aloud, looking for ambiguity
Tone: Example One

To: Female employees
From: H. Honcho
Re: Dress code
Date: 4 July 2010

Clients will be visiting next week. Halter tops and jeans will not make the right impression. It’s time you started dressing for the office instead of the beach. Leave your flip-flops at home!
Tone: Example Two

To: All staff
From: H. Honcho
Re: Reminder about what to wear to work
Date: 4 July 2010

During the summer, our dress code is business casual. We think “business casual” means clothes that feel comfortable and look professional.

Men
- khaki pants
- leather shoes...

Women
- casual pants and skirts
- leather or fabric shoes...
Professional Email Address

• Use a professional email address
  - University
    • firstname.lastname@rockets.utoledo.edu
  - Engineering
    • firstname.lastname@eng.utoledo.edu
    • engrid@eng.utoledo.edu
Business Email Address

• Use the company-provided address
  - Business purposes only
    (bloblaw@ibm.com)
  - No personal messages

• Keep personal email address for your personal life:
  - Use Gmail, Yahoo or Hotmail
No Blank Subject Lines

• Never, ever have a blank subject line

  - People are unlikely to read it thinking the email may contain a virus
  - It won’t stand out to them as they scan through their inbox
Long Subject Lines

• Try not to let the subject lines get too long:
  - Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Your Question

• No one wants to see this, and eventually the important words won’t be seen in the email window
Keep the Thread?

• Sometimes it’s needed for understanding
• Sometimes it simply increases the size of the message and gets in the way
• Keep the thread if it’s been a while between messages
• Use your judgement
Long Messages

- Don’t make email messages really, really long unless it’s necessary.

- If it is long, (for example you’re coordinating group work and email is the only way you communicate), let people know.

- Subject: Long email about final report duties
Attaching a File

• A good alternative to a long email message body

• Some email systems don’t allow attachments
  - use PDF for attachments

• Tell the recipient(s) that you have attached a file so they can check if it’s there!
Really BIG Files

• You may have the need to send a big report or other large document ...

• Place on a web server
  - Get help if you need it

• Send the link to your recipient(s)
Greetings and Goodbyes

- Emails should begin with a greeting:
  - Dear Mr. Yepremian, Dear Ms. Yemenijian
  - Dear Dr. Yammer, Dear Prof. Yutzy

- And end with a salutation:
  - Best wishes,
  - Thank you,
  - Best regards,
  - Sincerely,
First Name or Title?

• If you have never met the person, use
  - Mr. or Ms. Or Dr., etc.

• If you have met the person, and they have invited you to call them by their first name, go ahead and do so.

• However, if you think they might not remember that invitation (it was at a cocktail party or a long time ago) revert to the title.
The Exception

• If you have been exchanging emails with the person all day, it’s okay to skip the greeting and salutation as if you’re having one long conversation.

Dear Mr. Jones
Dear Mr. Jones
Dear Mr. Jones
Dear Mr. Jones
Use Short Paragraphs

• Don’t use long paragraphs
  - Anything more than five sentences can be too long
  - Use bulleted lists

• Remember
  - The reader may be viewing the email in a much smaller window than you are
Correctness

- No run-on sentences
- Use proper English construction, punctuation and capitalization

Remember
- Mistakes and poor construction cause your message to lose its effectiveness
Before You Hit Send!

• Proof read the entire message slowly and intently. Question every word!
• Don’t trust the spell checker!
“I wood like to no wear are tows are.”
≠
“I would like to know where our toes are.”
Anatomy of a Bad Email

- Vague subject line
- Too casual. No capitalization.
- Too lazy to punctuate.
- No capitalization.
- Is this a request for help? I can't tell. Am I supposed to reply and ask this person to clarify? If you want help, ask for it, and BE SPECIFIC.
Kissoff, Nicholas V

From:  
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2004 8:49 PM
To: Kissoff, Nicholas V
Subject: class

Hi, Mr. Kissoff

This is [redacted]. I was just letting you know why I wasn't in class today. I had court today and my license was taken away so I had no way of getting to class. I live in Bowling Green so I woke up late and couldn't make it. I apologize for the inconvenience. I suppose we took a test today, I was wondering if court was a good enough reason to make it up? If not I understand I just didn't want to start the new semester by missing the first quiz. I would have wrote sooner but I didn't have a computer to get ahold of you and I had to get your email from Joel. I appreciate what ever you can do.

Thank You, [redacted]
Example of a Bad Email

From: Kissoff, Nicholas V
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2018 2:22 PM
To: Kissoff, Nicholas V
Subject: Internship

What are some good internship companies? So quicken loans is doing a summer internship is for construction engineering, but not the technology Sent from my iPhone
Cell Phone Break

One minute text message break
Email Q/A Tip

• You can get busy and interrupted at work. Typing an email in one sitting may be difficult.

• In order to avoid sending an email that isn’t finished or proofed:
  - Don’t add address until after it’s checked.
  - Type the body of the message in Word then paste into the email
Business Email Policies

- What is the company policy for email usage on-the-job?
  - Monitored?
  - Archived?
  - Abuse is cause for termination

In a study of 500 companies with ethics codes, 90% of them monitored their employees’ email, and not all of their employees knew it ...
Have a Professional Signature

• Every email program has a way you can add a signature to your outgoing emails automatically. Make sure this signature has your name, number, and email address for business contacts.

• When you join the workforce, ask if there is a standard email signature for the company. If not, add one—it should contain all of the information on your business card.
An Example

• Angela Eastin
  Technical Support Division
  ACME Engineers and Architects
  Fremont, Ohio 43420
  Office: 419-555-2500 x231
  Fax: 419-555-2600
  angela.eastin@acmeengrs.com
Signatures **Should Not Include**

- Inspirational quotations
  - “You’ll never walk alone.”
  - “May the Force be with you.”
- Pictures unrelated to the company
Business Email Caution

- Email is forever
- Don’t send anything you wouldn’t want your Mother to read
  - Or your spouse
  - Or your boss
  - Or the general public
  - Anyone!!!
Business Email Sending Tips

• DON’T hit “Reply to All” unless it’s absolutely necessary. (The building is on fire!)

• DON’T add recipients if the subject has no relevance to them.

• DON’T cc: recipients up the chain of command. Let the first recipient judge where the message is to go.
Think & Double Check Before You Send

Wow, Tom. That was quite a scathing e-mail about the district manager...

...I'm surprised you CC'd her.
Telephone Basics

A quick guide to professional telephone etiquette
Telephone Basics

- Speak clearly & S L O W L Y
- Don’t chew gum while on phone.
- Avoid slang & swearing.
- Close your window if driving to reduce wind noise.
- Get to a quiet place to hear and be heard.
Telephone Basics: Calling

**When Calling Someone:**

- “Hello, this is <First & Last names>. May I speak to___? I was calling regarding _____. “
- Have a plan when you call, rehearse it first.
- Re-familiarize the party with your situation.
- Use formal titles (Mr., Mrs., Dr., Prof., etc.)
Telephone Basics: Answering

• When Answering:
  - Have a set answer response. Let them know who they called.
    “Hello, this is Bill Smith.”
  - Jot down the caller’s name if they are not familiar to you. Use it to remember it.
  - Be polite even if they are interrupting something.
Telephone Basics: Messages

- Have a professional message on your cell phone.
- “Hi! This is <First & Last names>. Leave a message and I’ll get back to you as soon as I can.”
  vs.
- “Yo! You know what to do!”
Telephone Basics: Messages

Leaving a Message:

• Be clear, brief and concise.
  - Don’t tell your life story.
  - Don’t forget to tell what you wanted.
  - Leave your full name and number at the start AND the end of your message.
  - •SPEAK CLEARLY & SLOWLY!
Telephone Basics

• Cell Phones
  - Turn off in meetings (interviews)
  - Don’t ignore others to talk on phone

• On the job
  - Follow company phone policies
  - Minimize personal calls

• Produce memos regarding phone conversations for documentation of conversations (Telecons)
Email and phone communications;
Use them wisely & efficiently!!