11.3.1 Email Etiquettes

It is important that whether for business or personal use that we should follow the basics of email etiquettes. Following lines enlist some important email etiquette that everyone needs to be aware of and follow.

1. **Be concise and to the point.** Do not make an e-mail longer than it needs to be. A long e-mail can be very discouraging to read.
2. **Use proper spelling, grammar & punctuation.** It is important for conveying the message properly. Improper spelling, grammar and punctuation give a bad impression.
3. **Use proper structure & layout.** Since reading from a screen is more difficult than reading from paper, the structure and lay out is very important for e-mail messages. Use short paragraphs and blank lines between each paragraph. When making points, number them or mark each point as separate to keep the overview.
4. **Do not write in CAPITALS (Case Sensitivity).** IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING. This can be highly annoying and might trigger an unwanted response. Therefore, try not to send any email text in capitals.
5. **Add an e-mail disclaimer.** Disclaimers in your internal and external mails can help protect you from liability if you inadvertently forwarded a virus by e-mail.
6. **Handle abbreviations and emoticons with care.** In business e-mails, use of abbreviations (such as BTW for by the way) and emoticons (smiley faces) is generally inappropriate.
7. **Gender Sensitivity.** If you are writing to a person unknown to you, your email should be gender neutral. That is, you should carefully not write or replace the *gendered nouns* with ***gender-neutral nouns***, *e.g.*, as shown in some samples below :

Gendered noun	Gender-neutral noun
man, woman	person, individual
mankind	people, human beings, humanity
man-made	machine-made, synthetic
the common man	the average (or ordinary) person
chairman	chair, chairperson, coordinator
mailman	mail carrier, letter carrier, postal worker
policeman	police officer
steward, stewardess	flight attendant
congressman	congress person, legislator, representative
Dear Sir:	Dear Sir or Madam:, Dear Editor:, Dear Service Representative:, To Whom it May Concern:

11.4 Ethical Essues

These days, we can easily say that our society is information society and our era is information era. As we all know that ***information*** *is the means to acquire knowledge*. In other words, we can say that *information forms the intellectual capital* for a person or body. However, there are many ethical issues involved with the usage and availability of information.

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Some common ethical issues are :

(*i*) Intellectual property rights
(*ii*) Digital property rights
(*iii*) Plagiarism

11.4.1 Intellectual Property Rights

As mentioned earlier, information makes intellectual property. Any piece of information is produced or created with a lot of efforts and it consumes a lot of time. The cost factor is also involved with the creation or production of information. Though once produced, it becomes very easy to duplicate it or share it with others. But this very thing makes information difficult to safeguard unlike tangible property.

NOTE

Intellectual property rights are the rights of the owner of information to decide how much information is to be exchanged, shared or distributed. Also it gives the owner a right to decide the price for doing (exchanging / sharing/distributing) so.

The creator/producer of the information is the real owner of the information. And the owner has every right to protect his/her intellectual property. To protect one's intellectual property rights one can get information copyrighted or patented or use trademarks.

The ethical issue involved with it is that information must not be exchanged without the consent of its owner.

The intellectual property rights must be protected, for it :

- encourages individuals and businesses to create new software and new software applications, as well as improving existing applications,
- ensures new ideas and technologies are widely distributed,
- promotes investment in the national economy.

11.4.1A Digital Property Rights

Digital property (or **digital assets**) refers to any information about you or created by you that exists in digital form, either online or on an electronic storage device. All of your digital property comprises what is known as your ***digital estate***.

DIGITAL PROPERTY

"**Digital property** (or **digital assets**) refers to any information about you or created by you that exists in digital form, either online or on an electronic storage device."

Examples of digital property include : *any online personal accounts, such as email and communications accounts, social media accounts, shopping accounts, photo and video sharing accounts, video gaming accounts, online storage accounts, and websites and blogs that you may manage ; domain names registered in your name ; intellectual property, including copyrighted materials, trademarks, patents and any software or code (such as software tools created by you or games or apps created by you) you may have written and own etc.*

Digital property rights lie with the owner. Legally a person who has created it or the owner who has got it developed by paying legally is the legal owner of a digital property. Only the owner can use and decide who all and in what form can his/her digital asset may be used by other, whether by making payments or by buying it or by obtaining its license or usage rights etc. But this is not the case generally; there are many threats to digital properties.

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Threats to Digital Properties

Let us briefly talk about common threats to digital properties :

1. **Digital software penetration tools.** Although one needs to buy usage rights or license to use a digital property, there are many software penetration tools such as *cracks* and *keygens*, tools created by hackers to penetrate your software's registration system and enable unauthorized users to freely access your software without actually paying for it.
2. **Stealing and plagiarizing codes of your digital properties.** Sometimes other developers somehow get hold of your software's source code and then create plagiarized versions of your code and use it in their own software. In other words, they steal your software's source code and use it to build their own versions of it, and then sell it under their own company name.

Digital Property Rights Protection

As there are multiple types of threats to digital properties, there are many ways you can ensure protection of your digital properties.

Let us talk about these protective measures :

1. **Anti-Temper Solutions.** There are many anti-tamper solution available today which ensure that your digital property is tamper-proof. These anti-temper solutions use a host of advanced technologies to prevent hackers from hacking, reverse-engineering or manipulating your digital properties such as *utility tools, software, apps, video games* and so forth.
2. **Legal Clauses.** Add legal clause in the clauses of use of your software/digital properties. You must include a transparent clause in your software's *Terms of Service* that prohibits the scraping of your software's source code for reuse. This is a sound legal backup for you.
3. **Limit the sharing of software code.** You should share your software code only with trusted individuals who are part of development team. You should also use a Digital Rights Management (DRM) solution to protect your software from being scraped for source code using decompilers etc.

11.4.2 Plagiarism

Simply put, *Plagiarism* means *stealing*. Surprised? If you look into an English dictionary to find the meaning of word plagiarism, it will give somewhat like "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work."

PLAGIARISM

> **Plagiarism** is stealing someone else's intellectual work and representing it as your own work without citing the source of information.

Thus, **Plagiarism** is stealing someone else's intellectual work (can be an idea, *literary work* or *academic work* etc.) and representing it as your own work without giving credit to creator or without citing the source of information.

Any of the following acts would be termed as Plagiarism :

- Using some other author's work without giving credit to the author.
- Using someone else's work in incorrect form than intended originally by the author/creator.

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- Modifying/lifting someone's production such as *music-composition* etc. without attributing it to the creator of the work.
- Giving incorrect or incorrect source of information *i.e.*, wrongful citation.
- Failure in giving credit or acknowledging the contribution of others in a collaborative effort, to which you are also part of.

How not to Plagiarize ?

As most universities[1] put in their student-handbook. 'To avoid plagiarism :

You must give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory;
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words ; or
- Paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

Plagiarism is Offence

'If plagiarism involves copying not only ideas but also a substantial portion of a copyrighted work without attribution and without permission, it would amount to both copyright infringement and the violation of the 'special right' of the author to be credited.

Copyright infringement and the violation of an author's right to be credited are both civil wrongs and criminal offences. A civil suit may be instituted, and criminal charges may also be filed'[2].

Both civil suit and criminal charges are punishable offences and amount to fine and penalties.

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