

Instant Messaging is a very popular form of communication, as it's faster than email and allows you to do generally the same things as

with email. However, there is another form of online communication that is gaining popularity: ephemeral messaging.

2C. - Introduction to Ephemeral Messaging

Ephemeral messaging is similar to instant messaging, with one major difference. Ephemeral messages are designed to disappear.

Why would you want your messages to disappear? Maybe you sent a regrettable one after too many drinks. Maybe you sent a naughty snap to your significant other. Either way, with ephemeral messaging, the program is designed to allow you to open the message, gives you a limited time to read it, and then it disappears. It was designed this way because of those regrettable drunk-and-texts that so many college students hate themselves for sending.

Take one of the most popular ephemeral messaging apps, Snapchat. This app was developed at Stanford University, when three college students Evan Spiegel, Reggie Brown, and Bobby Murphy were talking about one of them sending regrettable messages to a girl he liked⁹. After Brown said "we wish the photos we sent would just disappear" the three came up with a billion dollar idea. After all, Brown

wasn't alone. There were plenty of college students who, despite having heard the warning, "once you send something on the Internet, it's there forever" still sent things that they wished would disappear.

Hey, everyone's dumb in college. It's a rite of passage.

But those three college kids did a very smart thing. They created a messaging program designed to make people's message disappear. Snapchat was born and caught on like wild fire. When it comes to ephemeral messaging programs, Snapchat is probably the most well-known, but other programs like Frankly and ArmorChat are gaining popularity as well.

One thing to note about these ephemeral messaging programs is that they aren't all fool-proof. Tech savvy message receivers can often find other ways to screenshot the messages and save them, though ephemeral message developers are finding ways to work around these problems.

2D. - Etiquette and Netiquette

Electronic communication etiquette, or netiquette, can change from one year to the next, however some basics remain the same. Here are a few things you should always keep in mind for email;

- **No all CAPS** - I'm sure you've heard this before, but all CAPs is yelling. As

you shouldn't be sending flame emails in the first place, there's no need to yell. Which brings us to number 2.

- **Watch your tone** - Sarcasm doesn't translate well in email, and can come off as gruff. Avoid it when possible and avoid misunderstandings.

- **Reply all sparingly** - If everyone on the list doesn't need to see your reply, then don't use reply all. Especially don't use it just to say 'thanks' or 'got it'. Also, when everyone else is replying all, and you reply all to tell *them* not to reply all, you're just as bad as them.
- **Know when to emoji** - Emoticons or emojis can be a lot of fun, but don't always offer the most professional look. When emailing friends or family, they might be fine. However, when emailing a resume or professional correspondence, they're best avoided. A good rule of thumb is to not use an emoji until after the other person has first. The same goes for acronyms like 'lol'. They work ok in instant messages, or any time when space is limited, but might not always be appropriate in email.

- **Avoid fancy fonts and light colors** - While that script font might look pretty, it can also be pretty darn unreadable. Same goes for light colors. Even if it looks all right to you, display can vary widely from device to device, making that simple message you sent virtually unreadable.
- **Be mindful of time** - While I don't necessarily agree with this one, sometimes sending a message at 3 in the morning can send the wrong idea. If you don't have to send the message at 3 am, you may not want to. (I get some of my best work done then.)
- **Don't forward chain mail** - This etiquette tip is actually such a major problem that it really deserves its own section.

2E. - About Chain Mail

We all get them. Those messages forwarded from a friend or relative that says "send this message to 50 people and you'll find your true love tonight" or some other equally unlikely thing. Let's make this clear. There has never been one instance of someone finding their true love or making their first million because they forwarded a piece of chain mail.

The history is actually a bit more nefarious than that. The goal of chain mail is to make its way to as many people as possible. One thing scammers, hackers and social engineers know is that it is the best way to both get mass emails in bulk, and it's a good way to spread a virus rapidly. Chain mail is not lucky and no one wants to get it. At best, you're just annoying your friends by sending them unnecessary

emails. At worst, you're infecting them with a virus.

Of course, not all chain mails are as obvious. Some might include a funny video or story. However, the goal of that mail could be the same as any other piece of chainmail, with the goal of getting emails or sending viruses. As a result, even if you think it's the funniest thing you've ever seen, don't forward it. If you don't know the origin of the attachment or email, just delete it.

But what about if you get an urgent email that you think needs to be forwarded to people? What if you get an email about a missing child or some criminal activity to watch out for? Before you click forward, do your homework with a little bit of fact checking.