

The Tongue and Quill

AFH 33-337
27 May 2015



Air Force Core Values

Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do.

Acknowledgement

The Tongue and Quill has been a valued Air Force resource for decades and many Airmen from our Total Force of uniformed and civilian members have contributed their talents to various editions over the years. This revision is built upon the foundation of governing directives and user's inputs from the unit level all the way up to Headquarters Air Force. A small team of Total Force Airmen from the Air University, the United States Air Force Academy, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command (AETC), the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC), Air National Guard (ANG), and Headquarters Air Force compiled inputs from the field and rebuilt *The Tongue and Quill* to meet the needs of today's Airmen. The team put many hours into this effort over a span of almost two years to improve the content, relevance, and organization of material throughout this handbook. As the final files go to press it is the desire of *The Tongue and Quill* team to say thank you to every Airman who assisted in making this edition better; you have our sincere appreciation!

—The Tongue and Quill Team

BY ORDER OF THE

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SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

27 MAY 2015



Communications and Information

THE TONGUE AND QUILL

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The men and women of the United States Air Force must communicate clearly and effectively to carry out our missions. Although we live in an era of rapid personal and mass communication that was barely imagined just a few years ago, our Air Force still requires face-to-face briefings, background papers, and staff packages to keep the mission moving forward. This handbook, together with Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 33-326, *Preparing Official Communications*, provides the information to ensure clear communications—written or spoken.

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

This edition has been substantially revised to 1) standardize the format and layout for readability; 2) improve the organization of chapters and content within each chapter; 3) provide additional material on preparing to write and speak, writing with focus, communicating to persuade, research, meetings, briefings and listening; 4) clarify guidance for Air Force written products with formatted examples for each product; 5) add information on Air Force written products such as awards, decorations and performance reports; and 6) update guidance for electronic communications.

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CHAPTER 12:

Electronic Communications and Social Media

This chapter covers:

- Electronic Mail (E-mail)
- Social Media
- Instant Messaging (IM) and Texting
- Telephones, Voice Mail and FAX
- Electronic Communications Glossary

Innovation in the 21st century is at your fingertips—literally. The changes in electronic communication technologies, software, and applications are rapid with new methods to stay connected being developed and deployed daily. They are also subsequently disappearing at an alarming rate, as the new next big thing is introduced. *The Tongue and Quill* would be presumptuous to address the specifics of all electronic communication technologies. Such content would fill volumes of books and many large organizations have written guidance on electronic communications. Your unit may fall under the purview of such higher-headquarters guidance. But we would also be remiss if we did not address some fundamental principles applicable to all electronic communications. For these reasons, we'll hit the basics here and suggest you check with your local experts for more details on policies applicable to your electronic communications and social media.

To keep this chapter both simple and relevant, we focus on electronic mail (e-mail), social media, voice mail and FAX since these are the official means of many or most electronic communications in the Air Force; however, the principles here can be applied to other electronic communications and “the next big thing” that is just around the corner. At the end of the day, electronic communications are just forms for communicating with each other and we need to treat all communications with the same attitude as if we were face to face.

Electronic Mail (E-Mail)

The Air Force has learned a great deal about e-mail since it was adopted into the fabric of our Service and these lessons remain valid today. We have learned that there are both advantages and disadvantages; that we must differentiate between personal or official communications; that all communications are more effective when they are well organized; and that there are special considerations and protocols for e-mail.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Though some communication guidelines are universal (FOCUS principles, the Seven Steps to Effective Communication, etc.), e-mail is a unique medium—it’s advantages can easily become disadvantages, especially when you consider the ability to reach numerous people at once and the longevity of electronic communications.

- Three common e-mail advantages
 - It’s fast.
 - It can get to more people.
 - It’s paperless.
- Three common e-mail disadvantages
 - It’s fast ... but a quickly written e-mail can fan as many fires as it extinguishes.
 - It can get to more people ... but too many copies can clog the network and can be forwarded into the wrong hands.
 - It’s paperless ... but leaves a permanent electronic trail; can disappear permanently with power fluctuations; and too many times we print our e-mail (on recycled paper).

E-mail: Personal and Official

E-mail may have started as an informal communication technique, but today it covers the spectrum from personal to professional. **Professional** or **official e-mail** is different from personal e-mail—it’s more like a business memo. It *does* affect the Air Force and the rules you follow should conform to military courtesy. The same care and attention to detail should be taken with professional e-mail as with “paper copy” correspondence. The following pages provide guidelines to help keep you on track with your e-mail correspondence.

Chapter 3 of AFMAN 33-152, *User Responsibilities and Guidance for Information Systems*, provides guidance on what constitutes “effective use of Internet-based capabilities,” especially as

applied to personal and official use of e-mail. “Government-provided hardware and software are for official use and limited authorized personal use only. Limited personal use must be of reasonable duration and frequency that have been approved by the supervisors and do not adversely affect performance of official duties, overburden systems or reflect adversely on the Air Force or the DOD.”

The responsible use of Internet-based capabilities from AFMAN 33-152, chapter 3, specifically addresses or prohibits certain actions on government communication systems. The following actions are prohibited on government communication systems:

- Unauthorized personal use.
- Uses that adversely reflects on the DoD or the Air Force.
- Unauthorized storing, processing, displaying or transmitting prohibited content.
- Storing or processing classified information on any system not approved for classified processing.
- Using copyrighted material in violation of the rights of the owner of the copyrights.
- Unauthorized use of the account or identity of another person or organization.
- Unauthorized viewing, changing, damaging, deleting or blocking of another user’s files.
- Attempting to circumvent, modify or defeat security systems.
- Obtaining, installing, copying, storing or using software in violation of the appropriate vendor’s license agreement.
- Permitting an unauthorized individual access to a government-owned or government-operated system.
- Unauthorized modification of the network operating system or configuration.
- Copying and posting of FOUO, controlled unclassified information (CUI), Critical Information (CI) and/or personally identifiable information (PII) on DoD–owned, –operated, or –controlled publically accessible sites or on commercial Internet-based capabilities.
- Unauthorized downloading and installing freeware, shareware or any other software.

The network, like the phone, is subject to monitoring. Your e-mail is saved on back-up files and servers. Once written and sent, an e-mail is a permanent part of the electronic record.

Personal E-Mail

Personal e-mail sometimes contains shorthand and slang that would be unacceptable in a professional communication. Emoticons (facial expressions) or abbreviations are sometimes used with humor or satire in an attempt to make sure the audience doesn’t “take things the wrong way.” They are a resource, but use them sparingly. Some of them are more clever than clear, and much of your audience may only know the smiling face.

Official E-Mail

Official e-mail consumes a large part of the day for many Airmen. We can accomplish a great deal by e-mail, especially with those who are at a distance. E-mail can be particularly useful for electronically staffing official documents, ideas and initiatives. If properly managed, e-mail coordination and staffing can increase efficiency. If not managed well, e-mail staffing is just as problematic as paper folders and distribution envelopes lost in the system. To maximize the efficiency of e-mail coordination and staffing, use organizational accounts when sending correspondence to offices for coordination or action. Each MAJCOM typically issues their own guidance on the details of how electronic staffing should be implemented, and local commanders may provide additional guidelines that take into account the local conditions and unit operating procedures. Check your local guidance for electronic staffing implementation details.

Official E-Mail: An Example

A professional e-mail has three distinct qualities: FOCUS, FOCUS, and FOCUS (focused, organized, clear, understandable and supported). Experience amongst the authors of *The Tongue and Quill* tells us that shorter e-mails tend to communicate better than longer e-mails. This suggests that while you must address the issue, the whole issue, and nothing but the issue you cannot write *War and Peace* levels of detail into every e-mail and expect any action quickly. Balance what you present in an e-mail with the audience and action you need. Focus their attention on the issue and what needs to be done—nothing more, and nothing less.

From: [system-generated user information]
To: [appropriate organizational account, individuals, or distribution list for ACTION]
Cc: [as required for INFORMATION]
Subject: INFO: Air Force Doctrine Update
Date: [system-generated date-time group]

[Greeting],

BLUF: Effective 29 Oct 13, all Air Force Doctrine Documents (AFDDs) have been rescinded and replaced by core doctrine volumes and doctrine annexes.

- Core doctrine is categorized into five volumes: Volume I, Basic Doctrine; Volume II, Leadership; Volume III, Command; Volume IV, Operations; and Volume V, Support
- Each core doctrine volume is supported by one or more annexes.
- For further information, go to <https://doctrine.af.mil/>.

//SIGNED//

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This example e-mail focuses readers on a major change in the way Air Force doctrine is organized. You will notice that this e-mail maintains FOCUS by addressing only the issue (F); being organized (O); using clear language (C); understands its audience of all Airmen (U); and is logical with support information used sparingly (S).

Content Organization

A typical official or professional e-mail is brief and provides information or direction clearly. Some e-mails may be lengthy but should be clearly organized so that the reader has a rapid means to find out the facts and any action that may be required. As discussed in chapter 2, the BLIND and BLUF organization techniques work well to convey a message clearly in a limited space. Recent experience suggests that the headings for the electronic staff summary sheet (eSSS) also work very well for all types of messages—not just those requiring coordination. These three methods are outlined, below:

The “BLIND” Organization Method

When your space is limited by a form or process, the BLIND method of organization places emphasis on the bottom line followed by additional key elements. The BLIND method of organization is especially useful in e-mail communications where the content is brief and needs to be seen by “the boss” for action.

- BL = Bottom Line
- I = Impact on the organization
- N = Next steps to be taken
- D = Details to support the bottom line and any significant discussion points

While there are no set limits on how long a BLIND message can be, the point of the format is brevity. It is not unlike the content for the eSSS that includes Purpose, Background, Discussion, Views of Others and Recommendation; however, the BLIND organization technique is more readily used for quick messages in the field or office to a commander, leader or decision maker that provides enough substance to act without providing everything you know.

The “BLUF” Organization Method

The BLUF organization technique is even less structured than the BLIND organization technique. BLUF simply translates to “bottom line up front” with no set format for what follows. The official e-mail example, above, uses the BLUF organization method. With the BLUF method, the elements of the eSSS may be used to follow the BLUF to provide essential information. Use the technique preferred by the level of command for the intended audience of your e-mail. The point of the BLUF organization method is to maintain a focus on the action needed by leaders and decision makers while also providing key background information.

The eSSS Organization Method

By clearly stating your purpose, followed by pertinent background information, you can then present the discussion and views of others followed by a recommendation or bottom line. If used to organize an e-mail the e-SSS headings can be set to the left in all caps followed by the brief,

but appropriate, content for each heading. The common eSSS headings, in order, are PURPOSE; BACKGROUND; DISCUSSION; VIEWS OF OTHERS and RECOMMENDATION. They are typically all capitals and numbered as the primary paragraphs (level 1) in an eSSS.

Special Considerations and E-mail Protocol

There are both special considerations and e-mail protocol, or network etiquette (“netiquette”), for proper behavior while communicating electronically on-line and on smart phones, tablets or other mobile devices. In short, there are many ways to make embarrassing social blunders and offend people when communicating electronically. To make matters worse, there is something about cyberspace that causes a “brain burp” and erases the reality that we deal with real, live humans and not just the text on a screen. Respect the netiquette and remember that the network is multicultural: personal and cultural nuances get lost in transmission. Note, some aspects of the e-mail system itself (e.g. software, gateways and hardware) dictate some practices.

Special Considerations

The discussion so far has been fairly general with concepts and procedures that are applicable to any e-mail, but there are special considerations to employ when using e-mail in your official capacity. These considerations will help you decide if e-mail is the correct method to staff your package, get a response from the appropriate office, and avoid misunderstandings at the other end of the electronic trail.

- **Consider whether e-mail is the best choice.** Face-to-face conversations, phone calls, personal letters, or posted documents to a collaborative site may be more appropriate.
- **Use appropriate greetings.** Address people with their rank/title when appropriate.
- **Use appropriate closings.** Official e-mail should close with “//SIGNED//” above the signature block to signify official Air Force information. Restrict the signature block to name, rank, service affiliation, duty title, organization name, phone numbers (DSN and/or commercial as appropriate) and social media contact information. Do not add slogans, quotes or other personalization to an official e-mail/social media signature block.
- **Follow the chain of command.** Comply with standard procedures to correspond with superiors. Be professional and watch what you say since e-mail is easily forwarded.
- **Think of the e-mail address as the recipient’s personal phone number.** If the topic is important enough that you’d call the general without talking with the colonel, then send the message to the general. (Don’t quibble—sending the colonel an info copy of the message doesn’t count as following the chain of command.)
- **Get approval before sending to large groups or the public.** Check local policies for the proper permission you must obtain before using large e-mail distribution lists. Excessive e-mail sent to large distribution lists can waste a great deal of time. E-mail sent to the general public must still be cleared through proper Air Force channels.
- **Classified material.** Classified material should never be stored or transmitted on an unclassified computer network or system.

Rules for the Electronic Communications Network: Netiquette

The special considerations, above, incorporated into a general set of rules for electronic communications on the network, sometimes called network etiquette or “netiquette.”

Rule #1: Be Clear and Concise

- Filter information to provide what is necessary, not necessarily everything you know. Whether the sender is initiating, replying to, or forwarding an e-mail, it is the sender's responsibility to delete extraneous information and summarize necessary information near the beginning of the e-mail prior to submission.
- The “Subject” line must communicate your purpose succinctly and be specific. A specific, clear, and succinct subject line will help others locate your message later.
- Lead with your most important info. If your goal is to answer a question, then paste the question on top for clearer understanding.
- Use topic sentences if the e-mail has multiple paragraphs. Consider using the e-SSS organization method. Shorter e-mails are likely to benefit from the BLUF or BLIND organization methods.
- Be brief and stick to the point. Follow all the basic rules for drafting clear and concise messages. Clear messages are even more important in e-mail because we get so many every day. Address the issue, the whole issue, and nothing but the issue. Try to get your message into 24 lines or less—the typically viewing area on many computers.
- Use bold, italics or color to emphasize key sentences. If your e-mail doesn't allow these, a common method uses asterisks to provide emphasis of the *key points.*
- Choose readable fonts. Times New Roman and Arial fonts in 12 points or larger are easily readable. Save the script fonts for your signature.
- Spell check. Always spell check the e-mail before sending.

Rule #2: Watch Your Tone

- Be polite. Treat others as you want to be treated. Use tact; then use more tact. Then, for good measure, use more tact. Think of the message as a personal conversation. If you were face to face, would you say the same words and be as abrupt? If not—rewrite the message with a more positive tone.
- Be careful with humor, irony and sarcasm. Electronic postings can be perceived much more harshly than they are intended, mainly because you cannot see body language, tone of voice and other nonverbal signals that make up 90 percent of interpersonal communications. Positive enthusiasm can be easily mistaken for angry defiance when you use capital letters, exclamation points, and strong adjectives and adverbs.
- DON'T SHOUT. Do not write in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS—it's the e-mail version of shouting and it's considered very rude.

- Keep it clean and professional: E-mail is easily forwarded. Harassing, intimidating, abusive or offensive material is obviously unacceptable, but aim for a higher standard. If you wouldn't want it posted on the office bulletin board, it doesn't belong in an e-mail.
- Don't send in haste and repent at leisure. E-mail can get you into trouble—its informality encourages impulsive responses, but your words can be printed out and forwarded. If you're really mad about an issue, go ahead and draft an e-mail, but don't send it until you calm down and read it over. Never flame! If you do, be prepared to apologize.

Rule #3: Be Selective About What Messages You Send

- Don't discuss controversial, sensitive, official use only, classified, personal, privacy act or unclassified information requiring special handling of documents over e-mail. You just may one day see yourself on CNN or America's Most Wanted.
- Remember Operational Security (OPSEC). OPSEC is a continuous analytical process which involves identifying sensitive information, recognizing that information could be valuable to an adversary, and making changes in the way we do things to reduce our risk that the information will be compromised. Even unclassified information, when brought together with other information, can create problems in the wrong hands. The rash of hacking events in the news emphasizes the need for good OPSEC and COMPUSEC.
- Don't create or forward junk mail or chain letters.
- Don't use e-mail for personal ads.
- Don't fire or promote by e-mail. Some messages should be delivered face to face.
- Pick up the phone and call to acknowledge receipt of important or time-sensitive e-mail instead of replying to the sender via e-mail. Face-to-face communication is sometimes still the best means to communicate.

Rule #4: Be Selective About Who Gets the Message

- Target e-mail messages to only those individuals or organizations that need the information. Consciously choose recipients of original messages, forwards or replies.
- Use "reply all" sparingly.
- Get appropriate permission before using large e-mail distribution lists.
- Double-check the address(es) before mailing, especially when selecting from a global list where many people have similar names.
- Send official e-mail to an organizational e-mail account (instead of an individual) when an organization's answer or coordination is required.

Rule #5: Check Your Attachments and Support Material

- Ensure all information is provided the first time—attachments, support, key information.
- Check your attachments to ensure they are correct and you are able to open them.
- Cite all quotes, references and sources. Respect copyright and license agreements ... it's the law! The failure to cite sources is, perhaps, the most common omission. Knowing

“who says so” is an important factor in weighing the evidence where a decision is needed. Cite your sources.

- If the attachment is a large file, must go to a number of e-mail accounts, or will require frequent viewing, consider posting to a collaborative site such as the Air Force Portal or SharePoint®. This makes the attachments easily available for future search and retrieval and keeps e-mail inboxes from bogging down.

Rule #6: Keep Your E-Mail Under Control

- Lock your computer when you leave your workstation to prevent anyone from reading your e-mail or sending unauthorized messages from your account.
- Create mailing lists to save time.
- Read and trash personal e-mails daily. Create a .pst file on your local hard drive to keep e-mails stored on the e-mail server at a minimum.
- Consider using Microsoft Outlook’s “Out-of-Office Assistant” if you will be unable to respond to e-mails for an extended period of time. However, OPSEC considerations should take precedence when setting up out-of-office rules.

Rule #7: Use Proper Format for Official E-mail

- Subject lines should follow the format: [Classification/FOUO Marking][KEYWORD] [suspense DD MMM YY][Subject].
 - Classification/FOUO marking are only included if required.
 - Air Force classification marking instructions are found in the following instructions:
 - AFI 33-332, *Air Force Privacy and Civil Liberties Program*
 - AFI 31-401, *Information Security Program Management*
 - DoD 5200.1-R, *Information Security Program*
- Keywords, such as those below, help the recipient prioritize the e-mail.
 - ACTION-Necessary to take action (other than SIGN or COORD)
 - SIGN-Signature required
 - COORD-Coordination required
 - INFO-For information purposes only
 - URGENT-Time-critical information included
- The word "Suspense" or “Tasker” and suspense date are optional; use only when a suspense is required.
- “Subject” should be a short description of the e-mail (5-7 words is optimal) and should be updated with each send, forward or reply to accurately describe the e-mail’s contents. Remove the “FW: ” and “RE: ” on forwards and replies when it does not add value.
- Sample subject lines with Keywords, Suspense Dates and Subjects.
 - ACTION: Suspense: 14 Dec 10; Deliver E-mail Policy to DS for Signature
 - INFO: Plans and Programs Meeting Minutes

- SIGN: Suspense 14 Dec 10; Congratulatory Letter for Capt LaJonah
- Consider using the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) format as the first paragraph.
- E-mail body should:
 - Succinctly capture critical information and describe the issue
 - Describe the current status and actions taken
 - Clearly state expected and requested actions when appropriate
 - For forwards and replies: if the string of previous e-mail forwards or replies does not add value, remove them from the message

Rule #8: Use Organizational E-Mail Accounts

- Organizational Mailboxes (OMs) are shared e-mail accounts specific to an organization. Personnel associated with organizational units should be provided access to the respective OMs. OMs should exist at each level of the organization (e.g., directorate, division, branch, flight or element).
- Distribution Lists (DLs) are specific groups of e-mail addresses and/or other distribution lists aggregated into one named list. When sending e-mail to a DL, every individual in the list, or sub-list, receives a copy of the e-mail. Send e-mail to DLs sparingly.
- When communicating information to an organization, OMs are preferred to DLs. Each organization is then responsible for determining how to manage the e-mails in its mailbox and notifying its personnel accordingly.
- E-mail sent on behalf of an office or organization is official correspondence and should be filed and maintained in an approved file structure. Consult AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, or your organization's Functional Area Records Manager for records management procedures.

Social Media

People of all ages use social media daily. According to December 2012 Pew Internet Project data, 67percentof adults who are online participate in social networking. It's an efficient way to keep in touch with friends and family, and it is how many people get their entertainment, connect with people over common interests and receive news.

You are encouraged to use social media to share your experiences as an Airman. You can contact your local public affairs office to see if they can share your story, or you can publish information on your social media accounts. Whether you're sharing information with just your close friends and family, or sharing it with the world in an online video or a blog, you're informing people on what it's like to be a part of the world's greatest Air Force.

- Your stories might inspire someone to join the Air Force, support the Air Force, comfort a parent or spouse, improve morale or correct inaccurate information.
- Air Force families may want to use social media to keep in touch with deployed Airmen, network with other military families and share stories on social media.

People can feel comfortable about using social media and letting their Airmen use social media. It's one of the many tools available to communicate information, and it has a value-added capability of promoting interaction.

Using Social Media

Social media applications have evolved to become the primary communication methods used by today's Airmen, families and leaders. The dynamic nature of social media lets people interact with diverse audiences in an informal and transparent environment. It's an avenue for leaders to help shape conversations about their units and missions and connect with people on a personal level. However, all Airmen should remember that social media is not intended to push information; it's for sharing interesting content and building relationships with online followers. Social media channels help bridge the information gap for people who know very little about the military in general. Air Force Instruction 1-1, *Air Force Standards*, outlines how Airmen can use social networking sites.

All Airmen are reminded to maintain appropriate respect in their communications and conduct with other Airmen whether they are face to face or connected via social media. Showing respect does not squelch your voice—it enhances the impact of what you share and reflects the high standards of conduct and discipline that are part of the military culture. Respect is reflected in everything you post to social media: your photos, videos, posts, and comments you post to blogs. What you reflect online says a great deal about your values and beliefs and cumulatively creates a public portrait of the Air Force. *The Tongue and Quill* suggests that Airmen paint a portrait of the Air Force they are proud to show to the public; Airmen are encouraged to tell their unique Air Force stories.

Things to Consider when using Social Media:

1. Airmen are encouraged to tell their unique Air Force stories.
 - a. You are personally responsible for what you say and post—in all media at all times.
 - b. Be honest about your unit and mission (without violating OPSEC).
 - c. Consider how a post can be interpreted by the public.
2. Be cautious with the line between “funny” and “distasteful.”
 - a. Your “funny” may be “distasteful” or offensive to others—see 1.a., above.
 - b. When in doubt, err on the side of caution and leave it out.
3. Respect yourself, other Airmen, and your Air Force with what you post: the spoken word can never be taken back; social media magnifies this fact.

Emerging Social Media Trends

More social sharing options: Blogs, status updates, tweets, pins, videos, photos and pod casts are used to share thoughts and ideas with global social media users. The emergence of social sharing brings together all of these communication products to provide Airmen and the general public with multiple avenues for discussing trending topics.

Visual content reigns supreme: Social media conversations have morphed from text-based posts to status updates using photos, graphic illustrations and videos. Social networking websites are optimizing their designs to focus more on photos and video to allow users to tell their stories visually.

Mobile platforms and applications are booming: Telephones have evolved into modern multi-functional smartphones capable of taking photos and videos that can be uploaded to many social networking websites. Social apps are helping mobile and tablet users connect with friends and family members so they can share real-time information from any location.

Emoticons. Social media and e-mail messages frequently include emotional icon or emoticons within the text of the message to convey a sense of emotion that would be evident if the message were delivered face to face. Emoticons can be very useful; but their use should be restricted to personal messages—they have no place in official communications.

Common Social Media Platforms and Terms

Platforms:

- **Blogs:** Websites with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events or other material such as graphics or video (e.g., WordPress, TypePad).
- **Microblogs:** People share content in a limited message format using status updates, links, photos and video.
- **Location-based social networks:** Allows users to check-in and connect with people as they explore a particular place (e.g., Foursquare).
- **Photo sharing:** Use a website to host and share images (e.g., Flickr, Instagram).
- **Video sharing:** Provides a location where users upload, share, and view videos.
- **Social networking:** Promotes social interaction among users through posts, commentaries, links, photos and videos.
- **Social news and bookmarking:** A forum where users share social news trends. It's common to see social news feeds combine social bookmarking on news-related items. This allows users to manage content by preferences.
- **Visual bookmarking:** A unique platform that uses a “visual” bookmark to allow users to share Web links to information through imagery.

Terms:

- **Circles:** Groups and organizes friends, colleagues and acquaintances on Google™+.
- **Hangout:** Video service on Google™+ that allows you to video chat with up to 10 Google™+ users at a time.
- **Internet Meme:** An idea or concept that is shared between people online.
- **Pin:** An image or video added to a Pinterest® board and shared with other users.

- **Board:** Organizes pins on Pinterest® by topic.
- **Timeline:** Area on your personal Face book account that allows you to display photos, videos and posts by event date.
- **Twitter® chat:** Discussion that occurs on Twitter® around a specific hashtag at a specified date and time.

Social Media Tips

The following tips are not exhaustive, but they are a good starting point for Airmen to consider when using social media. Most of these tips are merely extensions of what we have learned through years of good staff work and the emergence of e-mail. The principles of obeying the law, being you, respect and personal security still apply in today's social media environment.

1. **Obey applicable laws.** You are an Airman 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As such, you must obey federal law, DoD directives, Air Force instructions, and the Uniform Code of Military Justice when using social media. This applies when using social media in either official or unofficial capacities.
 - a. **Classified information.** *Do not* post classified, sensitive or For Official Use Only information. If in doubt talk to your supervisor or security manager.
 - b. **Copyrights and Trademarks.** *Do not* post any information or other material protected by *copyright* without the permission of the copyright owner. Likewise, do not use any words, logos or other marks that would infringe upon the *trademark*, service mark, certification mark or other intellectual property rights of the owners of such marks without owner permission.
 - c. **Air Force symbol.** The Air Force symbol visually represents our service's brand identity. To use the Air Force symbol on a social media platform, you must follow display guidelines found at <http://www.trademark.af.mil>.
 - d. **Terms of service.** Comply with each social media site's terms of service.
2. **Be you.** Represent yourself and only yourself in your social media use.
 - a. **Stay in your lane.** Discussing issues related to your career field or personal experiences are acceptable and encouraged. Stay in your lane and do not discuss areas where you have no expertise through direct experience, education or knowledge.
 - b. **Endorsements.** Represent only yourself and do not use the Air Force name to endorse or promote products, political positions or religious ideologies.
 - c. **Impersonations.** *Do not* manipulate social media identifiers or post content in an attempt to disguise, impersonate or otherwise misrepresent your identity with any other person or entity.
 - d. **Promotion for personal or financial gain.** *Do not* use your Air Force affiliation, official title or position to promote, endorse or benefit yourself or any profit-making

group or agency. See the *Joint Ethics Regulation* for more details on the ethics and law regarding the “Use of Public Office for Private Gain.”

3. **Respect, respect, respect.** *Do not* post anything hateful, offensive or illegal. This includes any defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful, or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material.
 - a. **Words have meaning and consequences.** Once you post something on social media it is impossible to “get it back.” Even deleting the post doesn’t mean it’s truly gone. Ultimately, you bear sole responsibility for what you post.
 - b. **Replace error with fact.** When you see misrepresentations in social media, identify and correct the error with facts and respect.
 - c. **Image.** Any time you use social media, you’re presenting an image of yourself and the Air Force. Don’t discredit yourself or our service
 - d. **Opinion versus official information.** Yes, tell them what you think, just make sure you state that this is your opinion and not that of the organization.
 - e. **Privacy.** Do not post any information that would infringe upon the proprietary, privacy or personal rights of others. Respect their privacy and expect the same.
4. **Personal security.** Maintain privacy settings on your social media accounts, change your passwords regularly and don’t give out personally identifiable information. Be cautious about the personal details you share with others—live or in social media.

Official Air Force Social Media Sites

The Air Force Social Media Program includes key social networking websites where the Air Force engages with Airmen, families and the general public. Here are a few links to official Air Force social media pages:

- **Social Media Directory.** <http://www.af.mil/socialmedia.asp>
- **Air Force Live Blog.** <http://airforcelive.dodlive.mil>
- **Facebook®.** <http://facebook.com/usairforce>
- **Flickr®.** <http://www.flickr.com/airforce>
- **Twitter®.** <http://www.twitter.com/airforce>
- **YouTube™.** <http://www.youtube.com/afbluetube>
- **Vine®** (for mobile iOS & Android devices). @usairforce
- **Instagram®.** <http://instagram.com/officialusairforce>

Instant Messaging (IM) and Texting

Instant Messaging (IM) and Texting, once leisure communications activities, have obtained a foothold in the Air Force workplace. When utilized appropriately, IM and Texting can lead to great efficiencies—they can offer advantages over both e-mail and voice conversations and they allow individuals to multitask. Simple questions between co-workers, previously requiring telephone conversations or in-person meetings, can be completed with a single IM or text

exchange. On the flip side, they can quickly become a distraction in the workplace with individuals using IM and Texting it outside of their original purpose. The following tips will help you be a responsible user of IM and Texting in the workplace and should sound very familiar when compared to the advantages and disadvantages of electronic communications discussed in the opening of this chapter.

- **IM and Texting do not replace staff work.** While IM can be used for official Air Force business, it does not replace official staff work. If your work requires an official record to be maintained, use e-mail or another means to accomplish your duties.
- **IM and Texting are typically not enduring.** While you can save your IM history, if your work requires an official record to be maintained, another method, such as e-mail, may be more appropriate.
- **IM and Texting can be a distracter.** Users should be careful to not use IM as a leisure activity. Doing so will lead to decreased productivity in the workplace.
- **IM and Texting are quick and easy.** E-mails can get buried and lost. If you need an immediate quick answer to a question, IM is a better choice than e-mail. IM can replace some phone conversations which can save you time.
- **IM and Texting are best utilized for one-on-one discussion.** If you have a large audience, e-mail is better suited to meet those needs than IM or Texting (in general).

Telephones, Voice Mail and Fax

Telephones, voice mail, and fax are key tools for staff communication, so we'll review some of the common courtesies associated with using this equipment. Different systems have different features, so check out your manual for all the bells and whistles. Here are some basic guidelines.

Telephone Protocol: Answering the Phone (Do ...)

- answer the phone on the first ring and in the way you would like to be called after identifying the organization.
- be pleasant and professional—you are representing your organization, as well as yourself, when you answer the phone.
- introduce everyone in the room if you are on a speakerphone—callers may object to the lack of privacy.
- put the radio and TV on hold until you're off.
- speak clearly, keeping your lips about 1 inch from the mouthpiece. Good posture or standing while speaking) will also improve your vocal quality.
- have a pencil, a memo pad, and your directories within easy reach.
- adjust your speaking tempo to match the other person's to establish instant rapport.
- ask if someone else can help if the person isn't there.
- take a number and call back instead of putting them on hold if you are finding something.
- give the caller the phone number before you transfer the call.
- allow the person initiating the call to bring it to a close.
- record important conversations, especially those that result in a decision, in a memo for record and place it in a file.

Telephone Protocol: Answering the Phone (Do NOT ...)

- transfer an angry caller. Listen carefully, never interrupt, and ask questions that require more than a “yes” or “no.” Take notes and let the caller know; this shows you’re interested and are willing to help.
- put the phone over your chest to put someone on hold—your voice goes over the wires loud and clear—use the “hold” button.

Telephone Protocol: Making the Call (Do ...)

- have your act together. Organize your thoughts and make notes before you place a call—especially if you’re representing your organization, seeking help or information, calling long distance or talking to someone more senior in rank.
- call during core hours (0900-1100 and 1300-1500) to reduce phone tag. What’s their time zone? When will they return?
- identify yourself and your organization before asking to speak to _____.
- be pleasant and professional.
- ask if the person has time to talk, but you need to keep it as brief as possible.
- record important conversations in a memo for record and place it in a file.

Telephone Protocol: Making the Call (Do NOT ...)

- put the phone over your chest to put someone on hold—your voice goes over the wires loud and clear—use the “hold” button.
- be the source of someone else’s problem; courtesy works wonders in both directions.

Voice-mail Protocol (Do...)

- record the message in your own voice.
- identify yourself and your organization.
- check your system regularly.
- return all messages as quickly as possible.

Voice-mail Protocol (Do NOT ...)

- leave amusing messages on an official system.
- leave personally identifiable information (PII) on voice-mail.
- assume your voice-mail is a substitute for answering your phone.

Voice-mail Protocol: Out of Office

If you will be unavailable for an extended period, set up your voice mail to be mindful of co-workers by going to voice mail on the first ring and being helpful to callers by identifying whom they can contact for assistance in your absence: *“This is SSgt _____. I am away from my desk. If you need immediate assistance on [topic], please call MSgt _____ at DSN 555-1234.”*

FAX Protocol (Do ...)

- make it readable: use Times New Roman and 12 points or larger font
- number your pages.
- protect your document by ensuring correct receiver information is entered.
- use black and white.
- use a fax when you cannot get someone to return your call, including a short explanation, deadline to return your call, and a “Thanks for your time.”
- send a return cover sheet with complete return address to encourage a quick reply.

FAX Protocol (Do NOT ...)

- send a legal-sized document unless you know it can be received.
- send personal, confidential or financial info unless you know it will be protected.
- use italic and thin-faced font types. It looks ragged and makes it difficult to read.

This brings us to the end of the general rules and principles for using electronic communications. The following glossary may be of use to those who are new to electronic communications or those wishing to look back on these terms in the future.

SUMMARY: To summarize this chapter in a single sentence, good face-to-face manners extend into the electronic media realm and these manners are captured by the Computer Ethics Institute’s “Ten Commandments for Computer Ethics,” below.

The Ten Commandments for Computer Ethics

1. Thou shalt not use a computer to harm other people.
2. Thou shalt not interfere with other people’s computer work.
3. Thou shalt not snoop around in other people’s files.
4. Thou shalt not use a computer to steal.
5. Thou shalt not use a computer to bear false witness.
6. Thou shalt not use or copy software for which you have not paid.
7. Thou shalt not use other people’s computer resources without authorization.
8. Thou shalt not appropriate other people’s intellectual output.
9. Thou shalt think about the social consequences of the program you write.
10. Thou shalt use a computer in ways that show consideration and respect.

SOURCE: <http://computerethicsinstitute.org/publications/tencommandments.html>.

Used in accordance with guidance from the Computer Ethics Institute.

Electronic Communications Glossary

American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII /'æski/ ASS-kee)—The most common international standard for representing alphanumeric text on a computer.

bandwidth—The number of bits that can be passed along a communications channel in a given period of time. Usually expressed as bits per second (bps). Each military installation has a limited amount of bandwidth—don't waste it with frivolous e-mail.

bulletin-board system (BBS)—An electronic system allowing individuals with similar interests to post and view messages in a public electronic form.

binary file—A digital file format used to store non-text data. The information stored includes executable programs, sounds, images and videos.

binary digit (bit)—The smallest unit of storage in a digital computer. All programs and data in a digital computer are composed of bits.

browser—A software program that allows users to interact with World Wide Websites. Example includes Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla and Opera.

client—A computer or program that can download, run or request services from a server.

compact disc (CD, CD-ROM, CD-RW)—A disk that stores digital information using a pattern of microscopic pits and lands to represent ones and zeros. One CD-ROM holds from 650 to 700 megabytes of data or the equivalent of approximately 250,000 pages of text.

data compression—A procedure used to reduce the size of a file to reduce the disk space required to store the file or the bandwidth required to transmit the file. Many different compression formats are available and each requires a program to compress and expand the file—zip format is one of the most common.

digital video disk (DVD, DVD-R, DVD-RW)—A disk that stores digital information using a pattern of pits and lands to represent ones and zeros. A specially formatted DVD is used to store movies. One DVD-ROM holds approximately 4.7 gigabytes of information or the equivalent of approximately 1.8 million pages of text.

Electronic mail (E-mail)—A message sent electronically over a computer network, such as a LAN or the Internet.

emoticon—Facial expressions originally drawn using ASCII characters and more recently drawn using an extended character set.

encryption—Changing the contents of a message in a manner to obscure the contents while still allowing the intended audience to read the message.

executable—A file containing a set of instructions to perform some process on a computer. A word processor and Internet browser are examples of an executable.

facsimile (fax)—A method of transmitting images of printed matter that predates digital computer networks. This method traditionally used phone lines but can now be implemented using computer networks.

flame mail—An e-mail message critical of some person or position taken by a person, usually more derogatory than constructive.

frequently asked questions (FAQ)—A list of questions and corresponding answers focusing on a specific topic. The FAQ is typically provided to members of a community to avoid the repetitious answering of questions asked by new users.

home page—The web page providing the entry point for a website (see web page and website).

hyperlink—A way to link access to information of various sources together within a web document. A way to connect two Internet resources via a simple word or phrase on which a user can click to start a connection.

hypertext—A method for storing, retrieving, and presenting information based on the processing power of computers. Allows computerized linking and almost instantaneous retrieval of information based on a dynamic index.

Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)—The native language of the WWW.

Instant Messaging (IM)—A type of communications service that enables you to create a kind of private chat room with another individual in order to communicate in real time over the Internet, analogous to a telephone conversation but using text-based, not voice-based, communication. Typically, the instant messaging system alerts you whenever somebody on your private list is online. You can then initiate a chat session with that particular individual.

Internet—The overarching global computer network connecting computers, servers and local area networks across the globe.

intranet—A network with restricted availability. An intranet may provide web pages, printing and e-mail services similar to those available using the Internet, but only for a restricted set of users. Most military bases run an intranet that is only available to personnel on that base.

Internet Relay Chat (IRC)—A communications program that allows real-time text-based conversations along multiple users.

list server—A computer running an electronic mailing list subscribed to by individuals with some common area of interest. Individuals typically subscribe by sending an e-mail asking to be placed on the list. Once added to the list, subscribers automatically receive messages sent to the list by other subscribers and may send their own messages to the list which are then relayed to all other subscribers.

local area network (LAN)—A system occupying a relatively small geographic area providing digital communications between automated data processing equipment, such as computers and printers.

modem—A device allowing a computer to send and receive data over telephone lines.

netiquette—Commonly accepted etiquette used when communicating over a computer network—network etiquette. Specific forms of communications might include e-mail, list server or IRC.

newbie—An individual new to using computers or new to a specific group.

newsgroup—A network service allowing individuals to post, read messages, and respond to messages posted by other users. Newsgroups may be moderated or un-moderated. If the newsgroup is moderated, messages may be removed by the moderator and user posting privileges controlled by the moderator.

organizational e-mail account—An e-mail account used to receive and send messages on behalf of an organization. This type of account allows an organization to maintain a single address for correspondence despite changing responsibilities within that organization.

server—A computer that responds to requests for information from client computers—see client.

web browser—See browser.

web page—An electronic document available on the Internet or an intranet that is viewable using a web browser (see browser, Internet and intranet).

website—A collection of related web pages.

World Wide Web (WWW)—The entire web pages on all of the websites available through the Internet.