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The Legal Connection

WHERE LEGAL TECHNOLOGY AND PEOPLE CONNECT

Do You Proof?

I don't know what it is about the digital age, but there appears to be a massive decline in the quality of the typewritten word.

I cannot tell you how many website owners, blog and article authors I have contacted due to typos. We're not talking the one word that slips through here or there – as humans that's bound to happen. I'm talking flagrant, in your face, how could you miss THAT typo and, even worse, why do I find at least one typo every time you publish?

Now, Martha would not call having typos in your content a good thing. Typos convey a lack of care, lack of professionalism and lack of attention to detail. Certainly typos do not generate a good impression for any business owner!

In our fast paced, digital world you still only get 7 seconds to make that good first impression. Having a typo in sentence 3 … well, lets just say, it

could turn some off and even worse can have some turn you off.

Typos are not only embarrassing, but in some instances, they can harm and even cripple your PC.

There's a huge threat to typing errors in the website urls you are visiting. Some not so honest people purposely purchase an incorrectly spelled version of a very popular site – such as liknedin or linkedim. Then anyone who happens to spell linkedin.com incorrectly will be taken to their "dummy site". Once your PC has connected to that dummy website, you're at their mercy.

What could they do? They could try to get you to log in or otherwise give up your credentials/passwords; or get you to buy something so they can capture your cc information; or they could automatically and immediately start downloading as much crap as possible to you PC before you can hit the red x and close the connection.

Who would have thought that typos could be more than just something that "slipped through" – but intentionally used in a way to actively mislead?

The best way to prevent typos is, of course, proof reading. I recommend you walk away from whatever it is you are drafting for a few minutes, then come back and proof read it from start to finish.

Another option is to print it out. You are much more likely to spot a typo on the printed page, than you are on the monitor of your PC. Something about holding pen/paper seems to queue up the proofing gene (at least in me).

In the end, typos matter – pay attention, proof read and protect your digital image.

SMARTER TECHNOLOGY
Experience Counts

FREE IS ALWAYS AT A COST – USUALLY YOUR PRIVACY

I don't care how compelling the text, do not download, install or incorporate any free or "beta" service into a core business process or on to a mission critical piece of equipment. First, the TOS almost always state that your information can be reviewed and acted upon. Second, anything "free" is generally inherently without any liability. So if the download breaks your computer, oh well! Free also means no expectation of service so if an account with a free service stops working/locks you out/is accidentally deleted – you really have no recourse but to sign up again and start from scratch.

Don't trust critical systems or equipment to anything FREE or BETA!

E-mail Tips –
Before You Hit Send

By: Judith Kallos
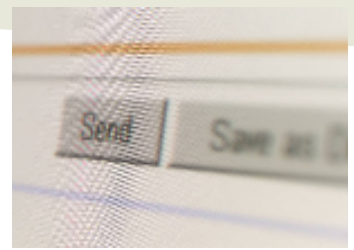
I get contacted most about e-mail misunderstandings. Always followed with the question "Do you have some tips so I can avoid this happening again?"

Most misunderstandings can be avoided by one side or the other not rushing through their e-mail activities and ensuring your e-mail will be received, read and perceived with the desired meaning by the intended recipient.

Here's my checklist of the items I have found are the biggest trouble makers that need to be checked before clicking Send:

1. Make sure your e-mail includes a courteous greeting and closing. Helps to make your e-mail not seem demanding or terse.
2. Address your contact with the appropriate level of formality and make sure you spelled their name correctly.
3. Spell check so that you reflect your level of education. E-mails with typos are simply not taken as seriously.
4. Read your e-mail out loud to ensure the tone is that which you desire. Try to avoid relying on formatting for emphasis; rather choose the words that reflect your meaning instead. A few additions of the words "please" and "thank you" go a long way!
5. Be sure you are including all relevant details or information necessary to understand your request or point of view. Generalities can many times causing confusion and unnecessary back and forths.
6. Are you using proper sentence structure? First word capitalized with appropriate punctuation? Multiple instances of !!! or ??? are perceived as rude or condescending.
7. If your e-mail is emotionally charged, walk away from the computer and wait to reply. Review the Sender's e-mail again so that you are sure you are not reading anything into the e-mail that simply isn't there.
8. If sending attachments, did you ask first when would be the best time to send? Did you check file size to make sure you don't fill the other side's inbox causing all subsequent e-mail to bounce?
9. Refrain from using the Reply to All feature to CYA or give your opinion to those who may not be interested. In most cases replying to the sender alone is your best course of action.
10. Make one last check that the address or addresses in the To: field are those you wish to send your reply to.

If the above issues are considered in your e-mail activities, misunderstandings will be avoided and you will be known as a pleasure to communicate with. It's a win-win!

About the Author: Judith Kallos is an authoritative and good-humored Technology Muse who has played @ http://www.TheIStudio.com for over a decade. Check out her popular E-mail Etiquette Web Site, Books and Free Tools @: http://www.NetManners.com

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Judith_Kallos Judith Kallos

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Confidentiality and the Virtual Assistant

By *Tracy Collins*

Confidentiality is of huge importance to the small business owner in this ever changing technological society. Every day, secrets are exposed, online and off, through carelessness or harmful intent. Confidentiality and trust have become major issues in outsourcing work of almost any kind.

I repeatedly hear the questions, "How do I know you won't sell the information I give you to somebody else?", and "How do I know you will be careful about protecting my information from exploitation?" These are valid questions, which should be asked of ANY assistant, whether they are in your office, or outside your office.

Virtual assistants are small business owners who have worked hard to get their business off the ground. They have spent hours and hours researching their industry, creating a website, creating logos, and marketing just like you have. It could take months maybe even years before their business is thriving, and they have invested heavily to get that result. It isn't just a job to them. It is their passion, their life, and their livelihood. No thinking business owner will risk their hard work over an issue as important to the client as confidentiality. If an in-house assistant is careless about confidentiality, they may receive a reprimand or lose their job. If a VA is careless, they lose much more, because they are much more dependent upon their reputation to secure additional work – there are no laws which say you cannot tell someone EXACTLY why you fired them.

Information must be protected from accidental loss, as well as from carelessness and outside threats. A computer virus is costly to both the client, and the virtual assistant, but the virtual assistant has the most to lose. They lose time, may have to spend money for repairs, and they lose credibility, and if important data is lost, they must make restitution to the client.

Anti-virus, anti-malware, and anti-spyware software are essential components on the computer of any virtual assistant. A firewall, encryption software (for encrypting emails on request), and security passwords are also basic elements that a virtual assistant installs and uses.

Print information is just as vulnerable as the technological information. The simple precaution of shredding and then burning all sensitive documents when the project is completed ensures that the information is destroyed in a way that cannot be reconstructed. Sensitive documents can be protected during the project, by storing them in a locked cabinet. The key is kept with the VA.

If you have confidentiality concerns about hiring a VA, here are some questions you can ask them:

1. How do you secure confidential information on your computer?

2. How do you secure confidential printed documents?

3. What do you do with confidential documents at the conclusion of an assignment?

4. What is your policy in regard to sharing information between clients?

5. What do you consider to be confidential information?

The answers to these five questions will give you valuable information in regard to selecting a diligent and careful assistant, so you can begin to build a long term relationship with a professional who will aid you in growing your business.

Tracy Collins owns a successful virtual assistance business, Collins Admin Services. With over 10 years of administrative support experience and being a business owner herself, she knows what it takes to run a small business and how hard it can be to handle everything on your own. For more information about how she can help, visit her website at http://www.collins-admin.com

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May 19 – 8:00 PM
Paralegal Mentor Mastermind Call
FREE call hosted by Vicki Voisin

June 9 – 1:00 PM
How To Locate and Work with a Virtual Legal Assistant

Working the Web Wednesdays:
June   3 – Networking the Net
June 10 – Domains
June 17 – E-mails
June 24 – Calls/Faxes

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