ZONTA

INTERNATIONAL

Protocol Manual

Adopted June 2009

ZONTA INTERNATIONAL

PROTOCOL MANUAL

FOREWORD

The original Protocol Manual was developed under the leadership of
Chief 'Folake Solanke SAN
Zonta International President
1994 - 1996

The purpose of the Protocol Manual is to present clear guidelines for Zontians who are responsible for the organization of Zonta activities at the Club, District and International levels. It is designed to enable the organization of events which exemplify courtesy, consideration and recognition of status.

The basis of protocol is courtesy, member to member, and to officials past, present and in some cases, incoming. All manuals offered to the members of Zonta International aim to assist the development of trouble free processes which demonstrate the Zonta ethos - mutual support, respect for achievement and business efficiency.

This manual was revised and adopted in June 2009 under the direction of the Zonta International Board by International Directors Dilruba Ahmed, Kerry Dixon-Fox, and Ragna Karlsdottir.

PROTOCOL MANUAL
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GENERAL PROTOCOL INFORMATION

Zonta's code of behavior takes into consideration the traditions and social customs of the many countries in which Zonta International has clubs and members. Procedures for protocol are based upon recognition of the responsibilities of the office held and consideration for the individual. It is therefore the office in Zonta which is honored with accompanying courtesy to the person holding the office.

The question of precedence generally arises in connection with social functions at convention, conferences and club meetings. A Zonta Precedence List is included in this Manual.

At meetings, the Presiding Officer usually is placed at the center of the head table. The speaker at the event is seated to the right of the Presiding Officer. A guest of honor may be seated to the right of the speaker or on the left of the Presiding Officer. If a podium/lectern is placed in the center of the head table, the Presiding Officer is seated to the left of the podium/lectern. If the podium/lectern is placed at either end of the head table, the Presiding Officer may be seated at the end of the table. Seating follows from that position in order of precedence. Flexibility must always be used to conform to local customs.

All persons at the head table should be formally introduced at the beginning of the meeting or event. The person offering an invocation (where appropriate) may sit at the head table. All seats at the head table should be occupied and it is usual to seat those who have a role in the program during that session.

It is appropriate to remind all attendees that cell phones should be turned to silent or off and photographs should be taken during special sessions and should not disrupt the business of the event. If designated photographers have been selected to record the event, this too should be announced, and the individual(s) should not disrupt the business of the event.

INVOCATION

Zonta International is an international organization and represents many faiths. Reference to any one religion is not appropriate. The invocation should be non-sectarian and reflect a universal point of view. An Invocation is used if customary.

SPEAKER

It should be determined well in advance if an honorarium is expected by an invited speaker. The invitation should include the topic, the length of time allotted for the presentation, the organizations commitment to necessary arrangements and, if applicable, requirements for travel, accommodation and transportation. A photograph and biography should be requested and received prior to the date of the program for

use in public relations material. It is appropriate to send a note of gratitude and resultant publicity where applicable.

To prepare an effective introduction for a guest speaker, the following guidelines might be helpful.

I . Be brief. Usually two to three minutes is long enough for a speech of introduction. It may be shorter if the speaker is prominent.

2. Qualify the speaker. Show that the speaker is qualified to speak on the selected topic by describing educational background and major accomplishments and by mentioning any honors or positions of trust held by the speaker. It would be helpful to request in advance a copy of the speaker's biography which will usually include education, degrees, positions of responsibility, honors, club membership and places of residence.

3. Pronounce the speaker's name correctly and clearly.

4. Announce the subject. Announce the speaker's subject, but avoid discussing it in detail.

5. Be accurate. Check with the speaker prior to the introduction to be certain that the introductory remarks are accurate.

6. Use the correct tone. Be sure that the tone of your introduction fits the formality of the occasion as well as the speaker's subject.

7. Remain at the lectern until the guest speaker arrives at the lectern.

8. Thank the speaker at the end of the speech.

GIFTS AND CORSAGES

Gifts and corsages are not required and generally are being replaced by other forms of appreciation in the name of Zonta or for the benefit of one of Zonta's many service projects.

TOASTS

If customary, a toast to the Head of State of the host country (countries) and to the Head of State of the country of the guest of honor should be in the form of title only. A toast may also be made to Zonta International.

"The President of the United States"	Response: "To the President"
"The Queen of England"	Response: "To the Queen"
"The President of France"	Response: "To the President"

FLAGS

Flags may be used at a social event or at a business meeting. In addition to displaying flags of the host country (countries), state or province, the flag of the International Representative (at a District Conference) should be included if from another country.

In the event that a "Parade of Flags" (Posting of the Colors) is utilized, it is important to follow the correct procedure for carrying the flags and to stand at attention for the ceremony. Flags should not touch the floor when carried or when placed in stands. Dignity is of prime importance.

ANTHEM

All present should stand for the National Anthem(s). It is a courtesy to play the anthem of the International Representative immediately after your own National Anthem(s) if from another country. The National Anthem(s) of foreign countries usually can be obtained from the appropriate embassy in all countries.

ARRANGEMENTS

At any Zonta meeting, it is important to appoint an event manager who is a zontian with experience, knowledge and skills. Decorations, flowers and other material should not hide the head table guests from the audience or vice versa. Seating positions should be clearly identified. There should be no clatter of dishes during the program. Prior to the meeting, the microphone should be tested to ensure that it is in working order. It is helpful to have water available for the speaker.

GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

It is essential for every person in the room to feel at ease. The members of the head table and the guest speaker should be treated as you would wish to be treated as an honored guest. The observance of protocol promotes orderly procedures and good relations among members at all levels in the organization.

FORMS OF ADDRESS

Visiting Zonta guests holding District or International Offices should be introduced using their correct title. Examples are International President, District Governor and Area Director. The chairman or any Zonta speaker should acknowledge honored guests in precedence of their office. For example, "Madam International President" comes before "Madam Governor." When there are many speakers and several honored guests, in the interest of time, it may not be necessary for each speaker to acknowledge all honored guests after the first speaker has done so.

LANGUAGE

The official language of Zonta International is English. Districts and clubs may use their national language when transacting busines in their local club or district. The official language should be used when the program or event is attended by Zonta International dignitaries. This provides an opportunity for the attending dignitary to participate in the business transacted. If this is not possible, simultaneous interpretation should be provided

THE BENEFITS OF OBSERVING ZONTA PROTOCOL

1. It projects a good image to external audiences from adherence to standards.

2. It reflects a well structured organization.

3. It provides a clear order for handling affairs and follows a clear order of precedence.

4. It promotes good internal public relations through courtesy among members.

5. It promotes the retention of members through a formal recognition system.

ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

The Zonta International Precedence List

Application: The Zonta International Precedence List is a reference list. It is a list of "Who's Who" and an indication of the order of status in the Zonta International Organization. It serves as a tool for such things as the planning of programs and ceremonies, making seating arrangements and hospitality considerations. This list therefore attempts to be comprehensive and should answer any questions members have about precedence. Parliamentarians at every level of Zonta International are not included in the order of precedence.

Practical application: In reality, rarely are all the listed parties gathered on one occasion. Those absent are skipped. Flexibility should be exercised with discretion.

Multiple roles: In the following list, if a person fits In more than one category of position, the most senior position attained should be recognized. For example, at a District Conference, the District Governor is the Presiding Officer and ranks at the top of the Precedence List.

When an International Honorary Member is the Guest of Honor, the rank for Guest of Honor on the precedence list is used.

Official addressing: As a courtesy in official meetings or ceremonies, the convention of addressing a Zontian by her office title (the highest rank attained) should be practiced.

The Precedence List

Presiding Officer of a meeting or event

International President
International Representative Guest(s) of Honor: (Those who are not members of Zonta)
Discretion should be exercised in the number of Guests of Honor as other guests may be considered important but are not Guests of Honor. Follow the order of precedence for government officials wherever possible.

Guest(s) of Honor: (Those who are members of Zonta)

International President-Elect
International Vice President
International Treasurer/Secretary
International Directors, in alphabetical order of surnames

International Honorary Members, in alphabetical order of surnames

International Committee Chairmen and Committee Members, standing committees followed by special committees, each group in alphabetical order of committee

Past International Presidents, in chronological order of terms of service
Past International Vice Presidents, in chronological order of terms of service
Past International Treasurer/Secretaries, in chronological order of terms of service
Past International Directors, by chronological order of terms of service and by alphabetical order of surnames
District Governors (s)
District Lt. Governor (s)
District Treasurer (s)
District Secretary (s)
Area Directors, by Areas in number order (A host Area precedes all other Areas)
Vice Area Directors, by Areas in number order (A host Area precedes all other Areas)
District Committee Chairmen, Standing Committees followed by special committees, each group in alphabetical order of committees

Note: When officers of more than one District are present, the following precedence should be observed: By office titles as listed above By Districts in numerical order (Host District precedes all other Districts)

Past District Governors
Past District Lt. Governors
Past District Treasurers
Past District Secretaries
Past Area Directors
Past Vice Area Directors

Note: When more than one past District office holder is present, the following precedence should be observed:

By Office Titles as listed above
By Districts in number order
By Areas in number order
By chronological order of terms of service

Club President
Club President- Elect, if relevant
Club Vice Presidents, 1st Vice President precedes 2nd Vice President
Club Treasurer
Club Recording Secretary
Club Corresponding Secretary
Club Directors, in alphabetical order of surnames
Club Honorary Members, in alphabetical order of surnames
Club Committee Chairmen, standing committee followed by special committees, each group in alphabetical order of committees

Note: Where office holders of more than one Club are present, the following precedence should be observed:

By office titles as above
By Districts in numerical order (Host District precedes all other Districts)
By Areas in numerical order (Host Area precedes all other Areas)
By Clubs in alphabetical order of Club Names (Host Club precedes all other Clubs)

Past Club Presidents
Past Club Vice Presidents
Past Club Treasurers
Past Club Recording Secretaries
Past Club Corresponding Secretaries
Past Club Directors

Note: Where more than one Club office holder is present, the following precedence should be observed:

By office titles as above
By Districts in numerical order
By Areas in numerical order
By Clubs in alphabetical order of Club names
By chronological order of terms of service
By alphabetical order of surnames

Addressing Protocol

Speaking

The Zonta International Precedence List is used to establish the addressing protocol by speakers in a meeting or at an event. The addressing protocol should be a short list used to cover the essential official parties. The following are guidelines:

The presiding officer is to be addressed first.

Address the Presiding Officer by official title and surname. "District Governor Smith", "Governor Smith", or "President Smith."

Address the International President by her official title and surname and the International Representative by her official title and surname.

Address Guests of Honor who are not Zonta members. Follow order of precedence of local government.

Address Guests of Honor who are Zonta members. Follow the Zonta international Precedence List.

Address all others in the all embracing "Zontians and Guests".

Writing

When writing, the address should be handled as follows:

1. Address on envelope:

   Zonta Title/Prof/Dr/Mrs/Ms/(Name) Mary Smith
   (Address)

2. Inside Address (on the letter):

   Prof/Dr/Mrs/Ms/(Name) Mary Smith
   (Zonta Title) Governor District 20, Zonta International
   (Address)

3. Salutation:

   Dear (first name) Mary:)

Recognition Protocol

To honor those who serve or served major positions, it is the Presiding officer's responsibility to include them in the greeting part of the agenda item on recognition. While the following are recommended for inclusion in the recognition protocol, the

Presiding Officer may refer to the Zonta International Precedence List for order of precedence.

For International Events:

- Current International Board Members
- International Honorary Members
- Past International Presidents

For District Events:

- Current International Board Members
- International Honorary Members
- Past International Presidents
- Past International Board Members
- Current District Board Members
- District Honorary Members
- Past District Governors

For Area Events:

- Current International Board Members
- International Honorary Members
- Past International Presidents
- Past International Board Members
- Current District Board Members
- District Honorary Members
- Past District Governors
- Past Area Directors

For Club Events:

- Current International Board Members
- International Honorary Members
- Past International Presidents
- Past International Board Members
- Current District Board Members
- District Honorary Members
- Past District Governors
- Past Area Directors
- Current Club Board Members
- Past Club Presidents

VISITING ZONTA DIGNITARIES

Zonta dignitaries making an official visit will receive hospitality by the local club according to protocol. This will be in keeping with the Zonta spirit of courtesy and fellowship.

A Zonta International officer or director attneding club or district functions in her own district should receive due courtesy as per the protocol manual

An official visit is defined as one of the following:

(a) The International President or an International Board Member designated by the International President visits and conducts business on behalf of the International Board, or

(b) an invited or residing Zonta International board member attending the ievent on invitation and conducts Zonta business as requested in her own district or other, or

(c) the District Governor or a Board Member designated by the District Governor visits and conducts business on behalf of the District Board, or

(d) the Area Director visits a club.

The visiting dignitary should notify the party to be visited of travel plans well in advance of the visit.

The following hospitality guidelines are recommended:

I . Arrival and Departure. The visiting Zonta official will be greeted by a local representative upon arrival at the port of entry. The local representative will escort the visiting Zonta official from the hotel or accommodation to the port of exit on departure.

2. Expenses. While the visiting official will pay for travel, lodging and incidental expenses, the local clubs should extend hospitality by hosting one or two meals and by arranging some local transportation free of charge. Depending on the culture and custom, a souvenir may be presented to the official during the visit.

3. Official Meetings. During an official visit, there should be local arrangements to ensure that the official meets with as many club members as possible. It may be necessary for a special meeting to be called so that a message can be delivered by the official. Biodata should be obtained in advance for introducing the official to the members. Refer to the Order of Precedence for conducting the meeting.

DISTRICT PROTOCOL

1. Area Director

Area Directors should be treated as honored guests at club meetings in their Areas. Each club is expected to extend an invitation to their Area Director during the term of office for an official visit. On such visits, the Area Director is representing the District Governor and District Board. It is a courtesy to send all announcements and invitations of meetings and special events to the Area Director even though the Director may not be able to attend. The club is responsible for accommodations and meal arrangements for the official visit.

2. District Governor

A club should extend any courtesies which are offered a distinguished guest to the District Governor when visiting the club. The Governor is representing the District and Zonta International and should be given special recognition. The Governor should be invited to make a short presentation. Members should be given an opportunity to meet the Governor. The club makes hotel or accommodation arrangements and assumes the responsibility for meals and other arrangements. A member should be assigned to host the Governor.

3. District Officers

The club should extend all courtesies to visiting District Officers such as the District Treasurer or an Area Director who is not on an official visit. The club does not have to assume the cost of the meal unless a special invitation was extended. All District Officers should be on the club mailing list to receive newsletters and announcements.

DISTRICT CONFERENCE

At a District Conference, the International Representative, if not the International President, will be a member of the International Board and will be representing the President. The International Representative is entitled to the same courtesies as the International President. The International Representative should be aware of the customs and dress of the country to be visited so as not to offend local custom.

Additional head tables may be arranged to seat all those who cutomarily would require to be seated at the head table.

It is important to have a responsible member to remain in charge of the head table arrangements to give special consideration to details, and to foresee problems before they occur.

When the Chairman calls a speaker to the microphone, the Chairman should remain until the speaker takes the microphone.

The District Conference would benefit from a Protocol Chairman in charge of all seating arrangements for all segments of the conference including business sessions and social functions. Seating may change from session to session and for social functions.

A host should be assigned to visiting dignitaries and be responsible for escorting the dignitary, overseeing accommodations, and accompanying the guest to the various venues at the correct times. The host shold be a knowledgable Zontian who is well versed in the affairs of the district. If possible, the host should contact the dignitary prior to arrival in order to assist with any needs.

INTERNATIONAL

Club and District Courtesies to International Board Members

Whenever an International Board Member is available, the member should be extended an invitation to club meetings and should be given special recognition. The Board Member represents Zonta International and an invitation to make a short presentation in an official capacity should be extended. If the club was aware of the visit in advance of the meeting, every effort should be used to obtain maximum publicity for Zonta.

The precedence list should be used for seating arrangements for International Board Members in attendance at Area and District Meetings.

International Liaisons should be included on the Governor's Newsletter mailing list. The International Liaison should be advised of all special events, especially new. club charter dates, to enable sending greetings in a timely fashion.

Honorary International Members must always be recognized. If they are a speaker at a District Meeting, they should be seated at the top level of the head table. All courtesies of hospitality should be accorded any Honorary International Member. Special arrangements will be made if they are invited guests at Convention.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

The ceremonies for convention are spelled out in the Board Policy Manual. A Convention Manual is available at World Headquarters. Arrangements for convention are made by the International President, the Hostess District, and Headquarters Staff.

The Zonta International Precedence List is used for convention.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Zontians are members of Zonta Clubs. The Club President is the members' voice for communicating to the District and to Zonta International. There are four levels of Zonta International to be considered as lines of communication.

1. The Club
2. The Area
3. The District
4. International (Headquarters when appropriate)

Suggestions, questions, issues and concerns of clubs should be directed as follows:

Club to Area Director (copy to the Governor)

Area Director to the Governor

The Governor sends the communication to one of the following:

- The International Liaison
- The Zonta International Foundation President
- The Zonta International Executive Director
- The Zonta International Committee Chairmen
- Other District Governors

Unless the other levels for communication have been copied as indicated. it usually is not appropriate or necessary for clubs and members to communicate directly with Zonta International or the Zonta International Foundation.

WEARING THE ZONTA EMBLEM

To wear the Zonta emblem as a pin is to proclaim publicly that you are a member of Zonta International. The emblem is a symbol of the mission of Zonta International. It should be worn with respect. The use of the Zonta emblem and Zonta jewelry is authorized by Zonta International.

Accepted attachments to the official Zonta pin are:

Gavel guards for Presidents
Area Director Guard
District Governor Guard

These guards are placed level or higher than the pin and the gavel is in an up position when in office. It is below the pin and pointed down when the office is no longer held. Members may wear the pin on any occasion in "good taste" on the left hand side .

Other Zonta Pins

The following pins are the property of Zonta International and are passed on to the successor following the completion of the term of office.

International Director Pin
International Officer Pin
International President-Elect Pin
International President Pin
Past International President’s Pin (The International President receives a Past International President Pin upon completion of the term of office. This pin is the property of Zonta International and should be retuned to Zonta International when no longer appropriate. It cannot be worn by any family member, friend or Zontian other than the Past International President.)

Members of Zonta. International should wear their "name tags" on the right hand side when the type of badge permits such placement.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

It is the task of the person presenting an award or gift to relate in an interesting, cordial and inspiring manner the reasons for which the recipient is being honored. Awards may relate to the Amelia Earhart Fellowship recipients, Honorary Members, long service, exceptional service or for winning a competition. Clubs may choose to award persons who have excelled in their field or area that have advanced the status of women.

The presentation speech may be brief but should state:

1. Who is giving the award (gift)
2. The reason for the award
3. How the recipient was selected (criteria)
4. The acknowledgment of other competitors (if in competition)
5. An effective closing to the speech and the giving of the award.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

While it is important to recognize the loss of Zontians in our clubs, is it also important to remember that Zonta is a non-sectarian organization. A memorial service should show respect for the deceased. The program should not include prayers that reflects any particular faith – if customary, universal prayers (non-denominational) are recommended.

APPENDIX A
E-MAIL PROTOCOL

E-Mail Etiquette Guidelines for Zontians

E-Mail has fundamentally changed the way personal and business communication is carried out worldwide. It is a useful tool that makes communication faster and easier, and it is being used increasingly in business communications. Zonta has embraced E-Mail as a communication medium, but it is important that E-Mail sent within the Zonta community reflect our status as professionals. Per policy adopted by the Zonta International Board 10 February 2000, "the use of E-Mail shall be in accordance with the same policies and procedures that affect all other methods of communication", for example E-Mail should not be used to circumvent the standard lines of communications.

This document seeks to establish guidelines for using E-Mail in a professional, respectful and courteous manner.

E-Mail Address and Personal Name

The first decision you must make is whether you will use your work E-Mail address, your personal E-Mail address or a separate address altogether for Zonta communications.

If you have E-Mail through your place of employment, check that your company's policy allows you to use it for volunteer and other non-business purposes. Many companies have Internet security policies that restrict the use of E-Mail for non-business-use.

For personal E-Mail addresses, you often have a choice for the name you will use (the part before the "@"). It is helpful to your correspondents if your E-Mail address identifies you in some way, i.e. it includes at least your given name and/or family name. It is also possible to obtain free E-Mail addresses through a number of on-line companies such as Yahoo or Google.

Most E-Mail programs allow you to create a "personal name" in addition to your E-Mail address. This name is typically displayed as the "sender" in a list of new mail messages, and will identify you better than your E-Mail address alone. It is best to use your full name, perhaps with a title. You may be the only "Florence" you know, but your Zontian friends around the world may know many – it is more informative to use "Flo Grace" or "Dr. Florence Grace, DDS" instead.

If your Zonta E-Mail address changes, be sure to let Zonta International know through the member directory, and also notify your regular correspondents. This is especially important if your old E-Mail address will stop working.

Sending E-Mail

E-Mail communications should resemble typical professional, respectful business correspondence. Keep your messages brief and to the point.

Because E-Mail does not convey the non-verbal information such as tone of voice or facial expressions, avoid sarcasm, poor language, inappropriate comments or questionable humor. There is too much room for misinterpretation.

The use of “emoticons” (smiley faces and the like) can convey some of the non-verbal cues you intend, but limit use of these to informal communication.

Keep to the subject as much as possible. If you want to discuss several different topics, you may want to send separate messages for each.

Check your grammar and spelling. Poorly-worded and misspelled messages are hard to read and can be confusing.

Do not send a message in anger. Never put anything in an E-Mail message that you wouldn’t want to see on the front page of any newspaper.

Do not include any confidential information in an E-Mail message, including passwords or credit card numbers.

You cannot expect that your E-Mail communication is private. First, you have no control over what a recipient will do with a message once you send it out. Second, companies often explicitly retain the right to monitor employees’ E-Mail messages. And finally, since most Internet E-Mail currently is sent as plain text, your message can easily be intercepted in transit.

NOTE: there is never any guarantee that an E-Mail message sent out over the Internet will be delivered within a certain amount of time, or at all. If your message is important, request acknowledgement from the recipient, and follow-up if you do not receive a reply.

Use a subject line, keep it brief, descriptive and informative. If sending a message to people for the first time or infrequently, put “Zonta:” at the beginning of the subject line, so recipients will be less likely to delete the message without opening it.

Address the E-Mail *only* to the appropriate person or small group of people. Because everyone on the “To:” and “CC” lists will see the names and E-Mail addresses of everyone else, it could be considered a breach of privacy to send a message to a number of people who don’t regularly communicate with each other. If the list is really far-flung, the E-Mail addresses of everyone on the list risk getting put onto "spam" lists, which could also result in exposure to computer viruses.

Use a BCC or “Blind Carbon Copy” to send a message to many people without each of them seeing the addresses of everyone else. This might be appropriate, for example, if you send your club newsletter to a number of prospective or non-Zontians. Address the E-Mail to yourself and include everyone else as a blind CC.

Some E-Mail programs allow you to send using a distribution list without showing all the names, and others allow you to do a “mail-merge” to send individualized messages to a group of people. These can be effective ways of communicating if your E-Mail program allows them.

Checking E-Mail

It is important not only that you check your E-Mail regularly, but also that you respond quickly if a message you receive requires a response. Sometimes a response can be as simple as "Thank you for sending the report" or otherwise acknowledging receipt. If you must research a question before responding, let the sender know you have received the request and will get back with a response within a certain amount of time.

If you will be away or otherwise unable to check your E-Mail for more than a few days, you may wish to make use of your mail program's "vacation message" feature if available. This is especially important if you are in a leadership role and routinely receive E-Mail from Zonta International, District Governors or Club Presidents. If your E-Mail program does not have this capability, or if you choose not to use it[1], it is common courtesy to inform your regular correspondents that you will be away.

Reply

When you reply to an E-Mail message, you usually have the option of replying just to the sender, or to the sender *and* everyone in the To and CC lists. Make sure you reply just to the people you wish to see your response.
Replies usually include the text of the original message, which gives the context for your response. For clarity, make sure that the original message is set off visually to distinguish your words from the original sender's. To keep the message shorter and less messy, include only the section of the sender's message pertinent to your response; delete the rest, including the original To and CC lists, and any previous messages in the conversation.
If you are replying to a message but are changing the subject of the conversation, change the subject too.

Forward

Forward messages only as necessary and to people who are likely to want or need to read them.

If you receive a message that tells you to forward to "everyone you know" or to a certain number of your closest friends within so many minutes – don't! These messages are known as chain letters and most company policies strictly prohibit circulating them. Many times these messages are sources of misinformation at best or computer viruses at worst. At the very least, they waste your time and the resources on your E-Mail server.

A Word about Spam and Viruses

"Spam" (unsolicited commercial E-Mail) is disruptive and annoying. Your E-Mail system may filter messages to prevent most spam from reaching you, but it is difficult to catch all of it. Likewise some legitimate E-Mail may be incorrectly tagged as spam. If your mail system allows, have it leave the tagged messages in a special folder that you can check regularly to find messages incorrectly filtered out.

Immediately delete any spam messages you receive, and never open any graphics or other attachments within such messages.

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[1]For example, if you receive a lot of spam messages, you may decide not to use a vacation message to avoid verifying to spammers that they reached a working E-Mail address.

E-Mail is often used as a vehicle for spreading computer viruses, often embedded in graphics or attachments. Your mail server likely screens for viruses, but some may still get through.

The best defense is to have an anti-virus program running on your computer at all times, and to ensure that it is always up-to-date.