



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TENNESSEE  
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER.

# Email Professionalism and Confidentiality

Peter Buckley, MD  
Chancellor

# Email is....

- Convenient
- Asynchronous
- Quick
- Self-Tracking
- Near Permanent
- Easily Forwarded
- Open to Proxies
- Often Unencrypted
- Potentially Public
- Potentially Discoverable
- Subject to Review by the Institution and Others
- Impersonal

# Do...

- Do be brief – consider a phone call or meeting if the email turns into a conversation
- Do write so that you would be comfortable reading it in the paper – or court
- Do realize that email about official business can still be public, even if you use your personal phone or computer
- Do treat texts, pages, voicemails, blog posts, tweets, and other social media the same way you treat email
- Do be sensitive to “email overload” and work/life balance – don’t expect responses to “after hours” emails or consider sending during official work hours

# Don't...

- Don't use email to discuss peer review matters
- Don't vent – documenting negative emotions is almost always a bad idea
- Don't write an email when you are angry or frustrated – it will show
- Don't put sensitive or inappropriate information in an email – it may cause a problem for the institution if publicly revealed
- Don't copy lots of people...unless you really need to, which certainly can be the case...remember all of us get 'email overload'

