

# How To Look Stupid...In Three Easy Emails

By Roger J. Burke

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Roger J. Burke  
online-wealth@online-wealth.com

Online Wealth <http://online-wealth.com>

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I would appreciate notification of where it was used, and if possible, a copy of the ezine or newsletter that it was used in. Please send notification <mailto:webmaster@online-wealth.com> . IMPORTANT: Please ensure the word--Mayapan--is in the Subject line.

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Life's full of details, all sorts of 'em. And, if you miss even one, the result can be disastrous, sometimes.

Working with email necessitates attention to a lot of detail, as you know. But, all too often, you miss something really important and--KA-BLOOIE!--it all blows up in your face. And you look deservedly stupid...

So, it came to pass that on a particular day, I wanted to send an ebook announcement to my favorite announcement service...in this case, Ebook\_News@yahoo.com.

It was our newest ebook, and a very important one, we thought. I took great pains to draft an enticing (I hoped) and informative announcement; very carefully, I constructed a Subject line that I thought was a real "grabber". I reviewed it all with She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed who, after narrowing her eyes fiercely while she scanned my efforts, finally gave her nod.

Hit SEND. Gone...now let's see what happens, hmmm.

Well, in less time that it takes you to switch from the TV show you hate the most, back came the email I just sent, with a terse message telling me that "this person is not a member of this group".

Huh? Pardon me...I've been sending announcements to this group for yonks, OK! There it is, my email address: webmaster@online-wealth.com already, in full view at the right spot. Something's really rotten in Denmark, that's for sure...

Computer glitch? Something about the Subject matter? Maybe Yahoo didn't like some of the words in my text...I'd been reading about how Yahoo now scans emails for certain words, although I'm not sure exactly what.

First up, though: check my details at Yahoo. I go back to the emails I received nearly two years ago, verifying that, yes, it is indeed the above email address I should use, and yes, I have been accepted...there's the darn acceptance email, for Pete's sake. So, what gives...?

Then, I send an email to the moderator for this group, explaining the situation and asking for help. A day later, I get back a reply that says, essentially, try to send my announcement again. I do that...but it bombs again!

Aaargh! Here I am, trying to get my announcement out, and I'm getting knocked back as a non-member. But--and here's the real puzzler--I'm still getting ebook announcements from other members, sent to my address of webmaster@online-wealth.com .

Now, come on: either I'm a member or I'm not, right? What the hey, Ah say, what the hey is goin' on hereah, boy?

Well...you're right. Something's missing...a detail, something I've missed. But, what?

I look at some of the announcements from other members, and one catches my eye: he's looking for some feedback about a question. So, maybe if I hit REPLY and send some feedback, I can test to make sure that I'm really a member? That should prove it...right?

Hit SEND again...there, that's gotta be OK! Wham...a few seconds later: back it comes, with another rejection message from Yahoo. Now, I'm really beginning to feel that I'm on another planet...

I look at the details more closely and this time, I see it's different. This time, the details say that "text only messages are acceptable"--no styles or HTML allowed. Huh? I've never used either for any emails to this group.

So...either I'm a member or not, and I'm sending emails that are not plain text when I can see that are just plain text, or maybe they are, but they're not really? With a mad glint now in my eye, I look around for a suitable weapon to reduce this PC to the trash that it most certainly is...or so I think.

I suppose it must have been my frustrated efforts that caught her eye, because Sherry turned to me from her computer to ask about my problem. My problem? MY PROBLEM?

Hey...I won't have a problem in a few moments, just let me get at this...this...machine...OK!

Just then, with beautiful timing, another email from the moderator: "I see what your problem is--you've been using the wrong email address to send to Ebook\_News. It's not 'yahoo.com', it's 'yahoogroups.com'."

Oh.

Well, OK...I guess I should have checked that properly, instead of being so anxious to send out the announcement, blinding me to important details. It really does help to have the right address in the first place...

But...that didn't explain the rejection of my REPLY, and that bit about "no style or HTML acceptable". Sherry sighs and reminds of this not-so-little detail: we'd changed our email client software about two weeks back, hadn't we now? And, I hadn't sent any announcements or queries to the group for, what, a few months?

Oh...ouch...again.

Hmmm, now that's a point. Quick check through the Options for setup and, lo: Uncheck the little box that is set to "Use Style" and reset to "Plain Text". Never did like HTML in email, anyway...

For me, it's words that count, not pretty graphics.

I sent a very nice (I hope) thank you to the group moderator, saying how stupid I felt. Maybe the lack of the proper address was an easy mistake, maybe not; the point is, the detail was missed. The complication of the change of email client should have raised a flag also; but, I was so intent on getting the message out, that I failed to properly appreciate the significance of messages coming in...

Pay attention to detail, I hear murmured in the background; yeah, yeah...

And, let that be a lesson to you, she says, as Sherry turns back to her graphics. Oh, well, I reckon this would make a good article...it's always nice to find out about bloopers from somebody else, right?

So, dear reader, that's why you've read it now...hope you had a good chuckle at my expense. Just keep paying attention to detail, pilgrim, OK?

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Roger Burke has been involved with computers since 1967, and has managed to break quite a few, over the years. He, and his wife Sherry, are now actively engaged in online self-publishing and promoting specific affiliate programs at <http://online-wealth.com> . If you have any comments or questions about this article, please send emails to <mailto:webmaster@online-wealth.com> . IMPORTANT: Please ensure the word--Mayapan--is in the Subject line.

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