

The Art of Email

Why?

E-mail is so heavily and globally used to communicate in the workplace... that unclear, garbled, poorly written e-mails waste time, money, and productivity

-Katharine Hansen

creative director of Quintessential Careers

Radicati Group 2017 study:

- Email is the primary form of communication across the majority of professionals.
- > 1 Billion email mailboxes
- Over 100 billion emails sent per day

Fast Company study:

- Sent 1000 cold emails to C / VP execs
- 45% were opened, only 12 / 700 replied

McKinsey 2012 study:

- ~28% of the work day on email

Adobe 2016 study:

- The average working professional spends over 3 hours a day checking email

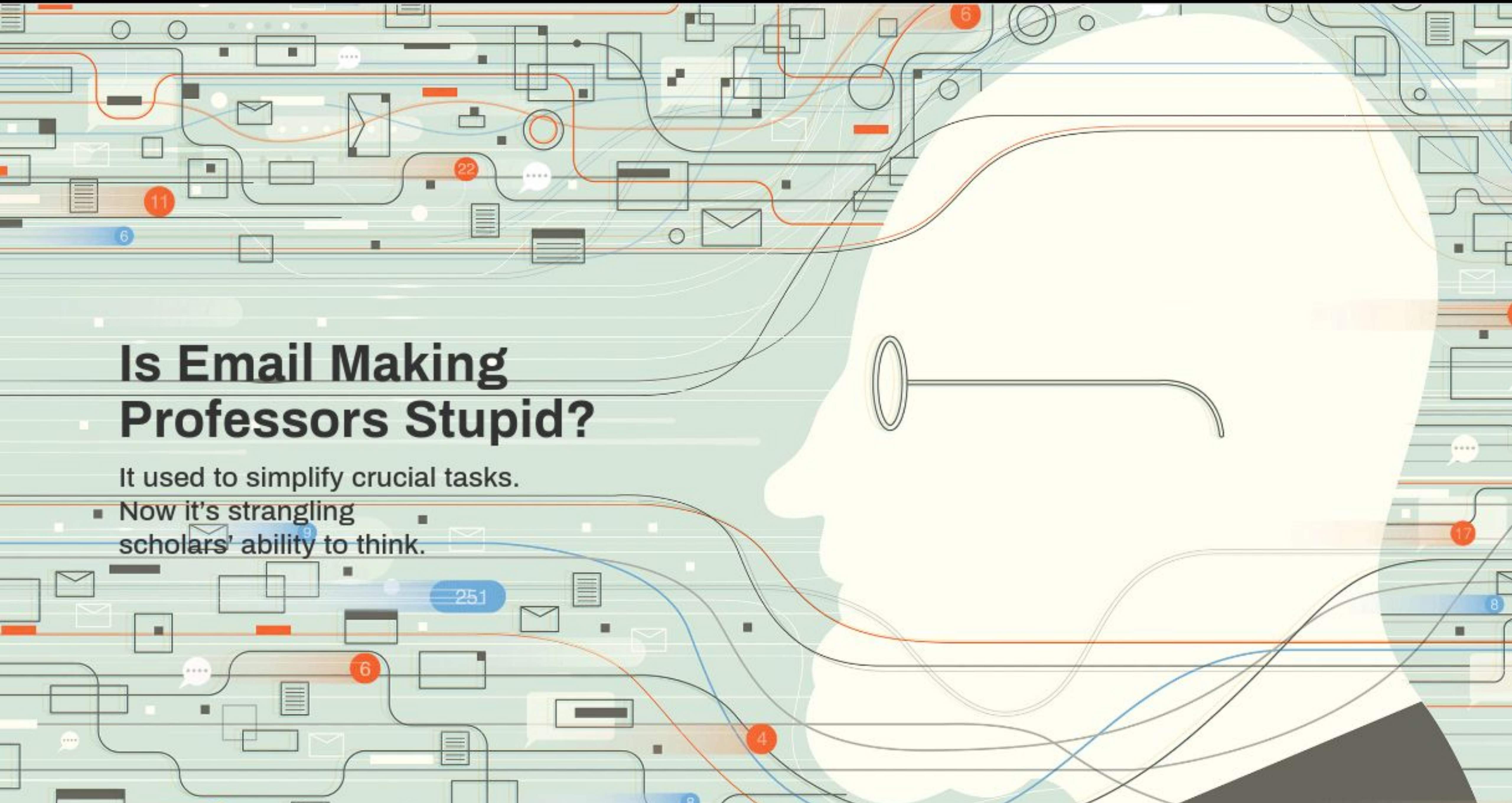
Ziker et al 2014 study:

- Academics spend 13% of their time on email: ~1.5 hours per day
- 10% of their time on the weekend

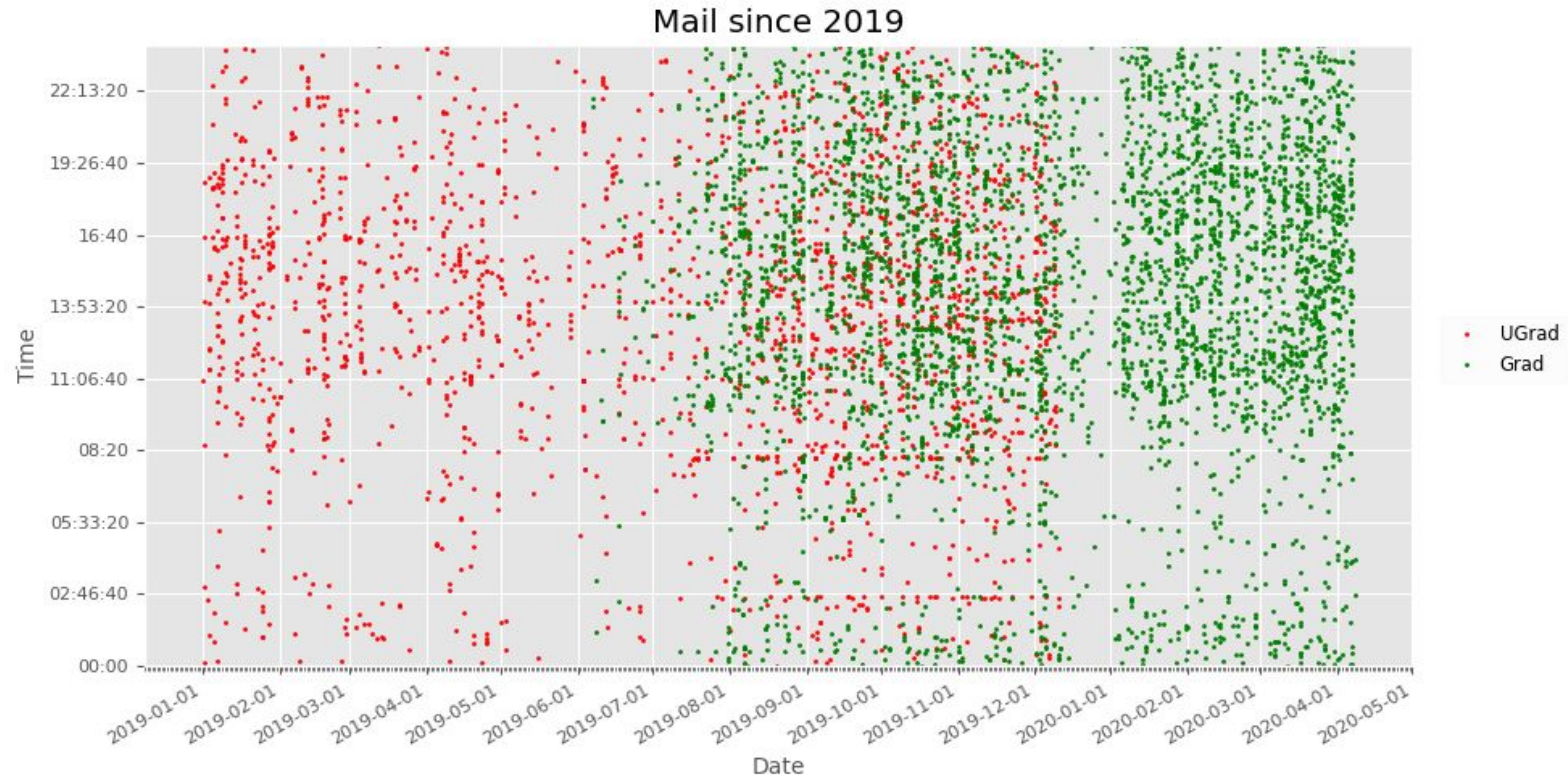
Is Email Making Professors Stupid?

It used to simplify crucial tasks.

- Now it's strangling scholars' ability to think.



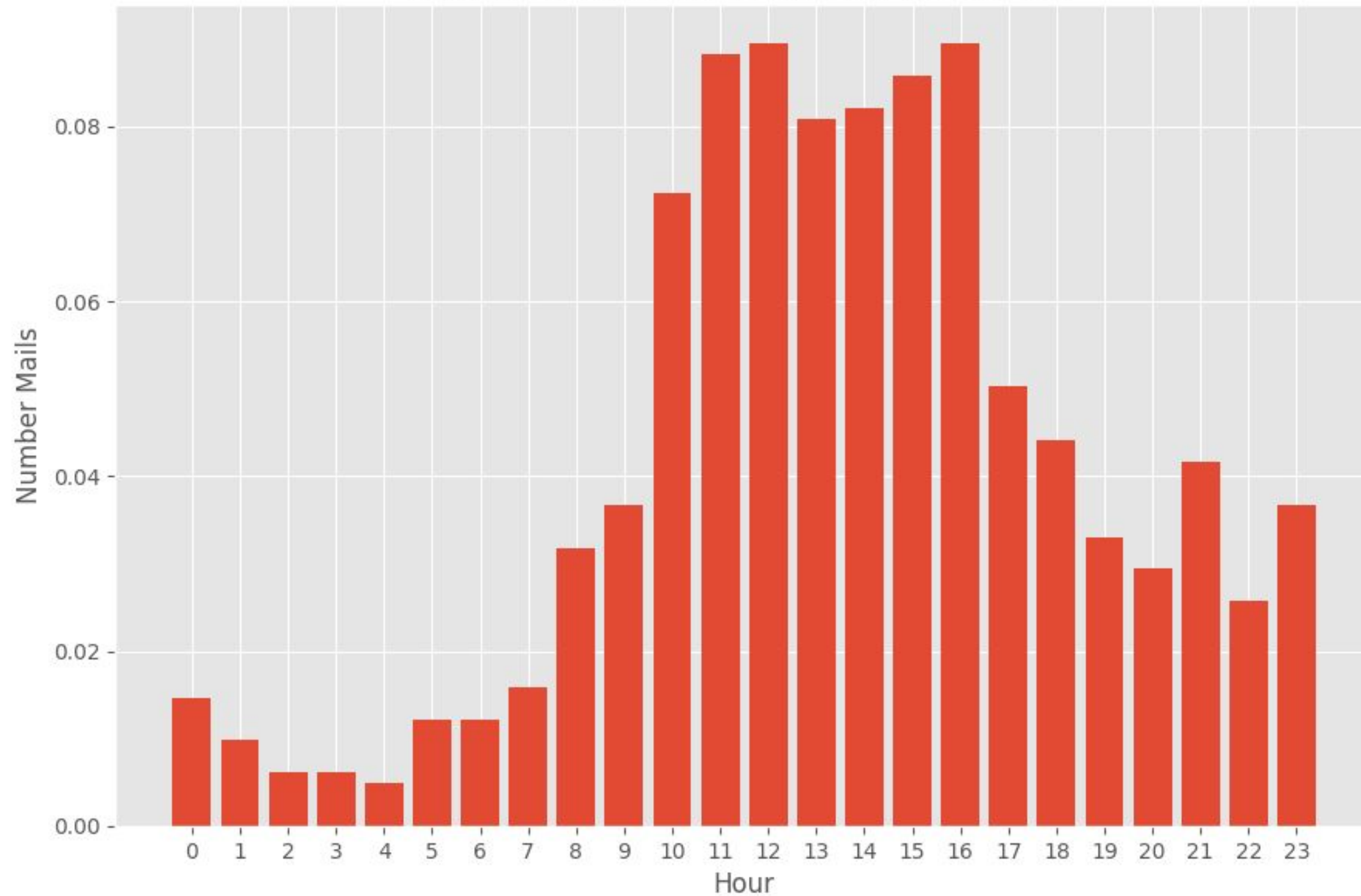
Email Case Study (Me)



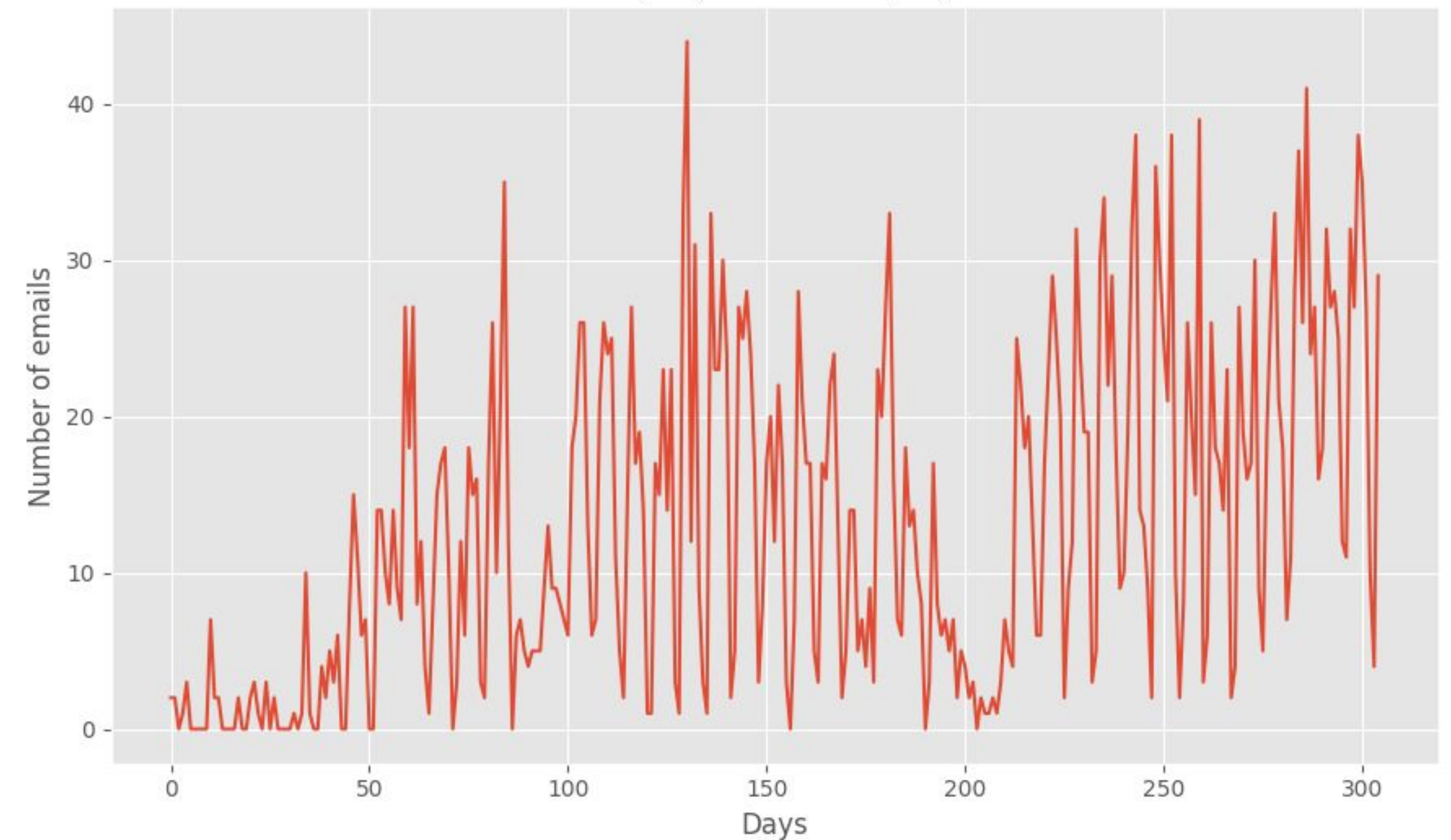
4000+ Undergraduate and graduate account email from 2019 (2 / 5 inboxes). Clear correlations with campus breaks. Shift in timezone aparent. "Bursts" within and across days.

Email Case Study (Me)

Probability of UCI mail sent per hour of day



Number of UCI emails each day
2019/06/07 to 2020/04/08



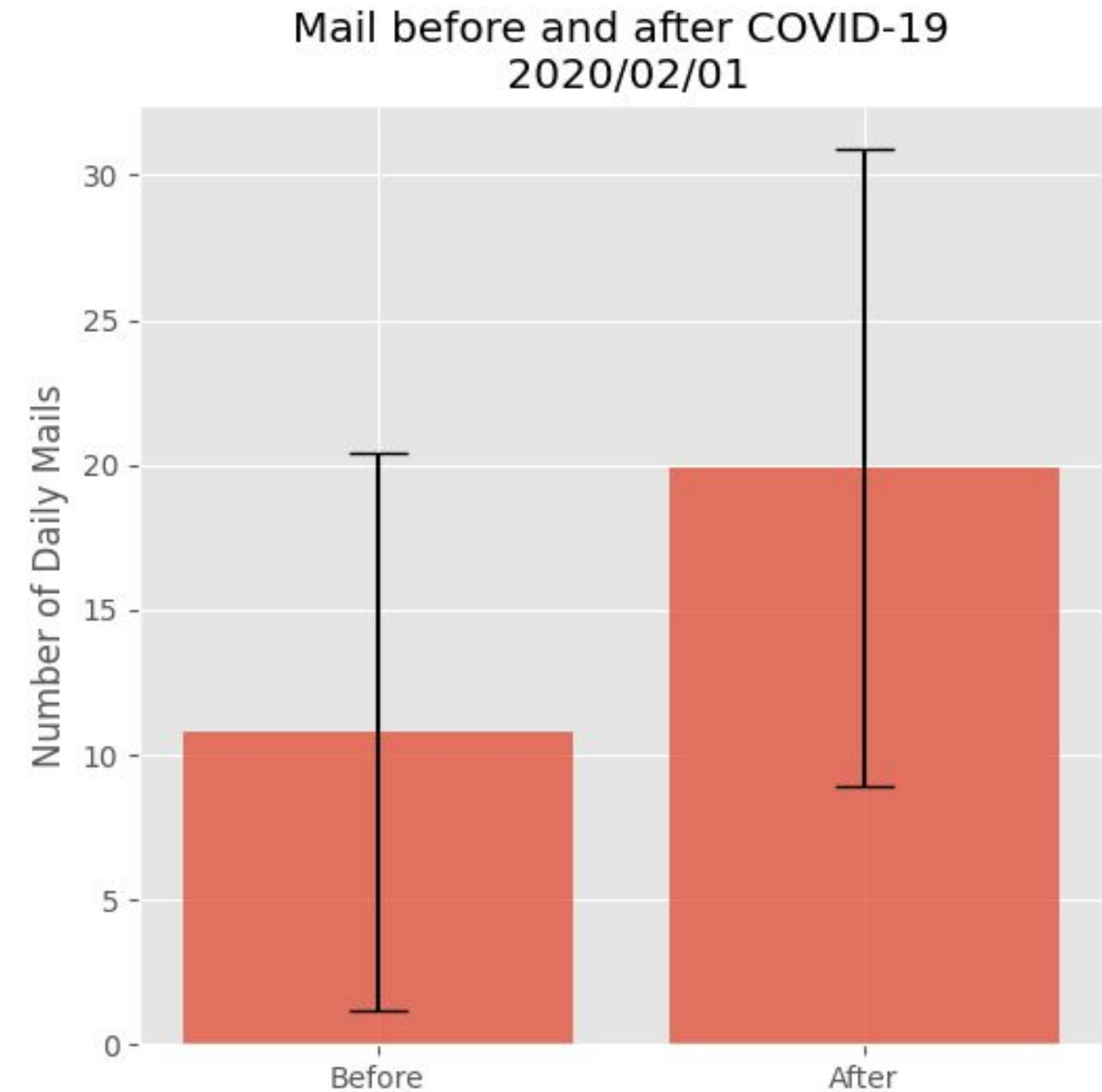
Graduate email account. Left computes the probability of sending an email by the hour of day. I'm a mid-day emailer, but the distribution isn't terribly tight. Right displays timeseries of my daily counts of emails. Interesting oscillations, probably the weekends.

Can see noticeable dips for breaks etc.

Email Case Study (Me)



Daily number of graduate account emails before and after Febuary 1 (Arbitrary COVID-19 threshold). While not the best model, a ttest between the periods was significant ($p < 0.05$)





Inbox (5376354)



The bad

2013 Sendmail Survey:
Among working professionals, 64% of have sent or received an email that caused unintended anger or confusion

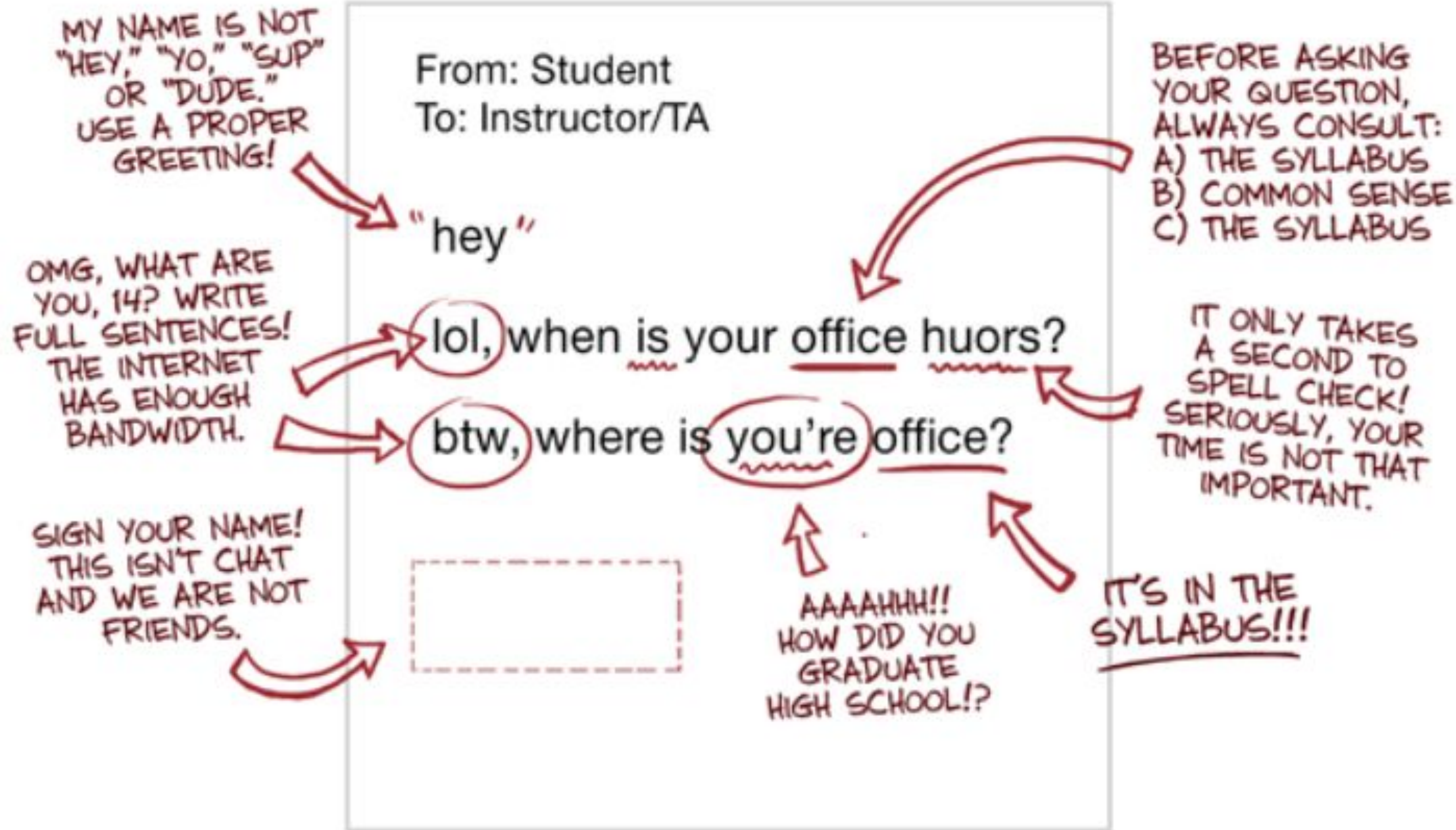
for email senders



for email recipients



HOW TO WRITE AN E-MAIL TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR OR T.A.



JORGE CHAM © 2015

Missing Class

• cartmanrulez99@yahoo.com

Tec. Marcus G. Anderson



Actions +

Monday, January 18, 2013 10:02 AM

Hey,

i am in your class this semester but have missed the first 4 days do to some unexpected problems with work and family. ;) I would like 2 make up the work if u can send me the syllabus and all the handouts,thank you, and also if i missed any important info. Will we b needing the book this semester because I am on a budget. LOL!

tha!

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: **freshman engineering**
Date: September 28, 2010 10:47:41 PM PDT
To: Gerald Recktenwald

Vague subject line

Too casual. No capitalization.

hey professor
its me [REDACTED] from your freshman engineering on mondays and wednesday
i apologize that im emailing you pretty late but im not understanding the homework at all
also i obtained Sparkfun inventor's kit from the bookstore

No capitalization.

Too lazy to punctuate.

Is this a request for help? I can't tell.
Am I supposed to reply and ask this person to clarify? If you want help, ask for it, and BE SPECIFIC.

Hello [REDACTED] and Professor [REDACTED]

This is the same student who didn't back his crap up and lost everything on the first assignment. I am basically trying to find out what I should do at this point about the second assignment. I had all my work on a Toshiba: Canvio slim hard drive that my roommate lost on Sunday. We've searched every inch of the house and couldn't find it. Due to the fact I work at UPS Monday-Friday from 10:45pm-4am, I knew I couldn't turn it in until Thursday (today). I already knew that getting a C is way better than getting a zero. I stayed up all night and put a sh*t ton of work and had to save it on a flash drive; just went to go take a quick piss and the spice rack fell, knocked my flash drive (which was still in the port of the laptop and cinnamon is in my keyboard as of now). So now my file is corrupt and have nothing. If consequences were nonexistent, he would be severely injured right now. If only you guys seen it, it would be something you see out of the movies. Again, what should I do at this point? Is there anything I can actually do? Thank you for reading this email and hope your having a better day than I'm having.

- [REDACTED]

Hi team,

We'll be meeting this Friday to review the changes to our quarterly metrics.

The meeting will go a lot smoother if everyone comes with three items they'd like to see addressed in Q4.

I BELIEVE IN THIS TEAM!

And don't forget to bring your smiles. :) :)

See you 9 AM sharp!!!!

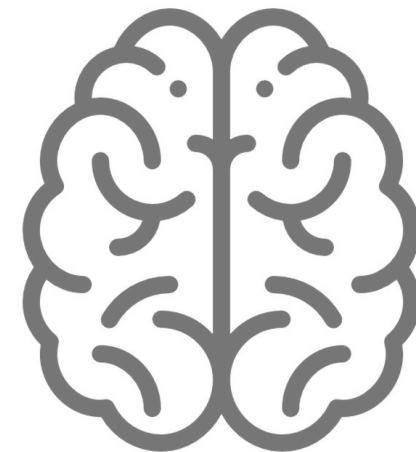
- Kimmy

The reason for this communication disconnect... is egocentrism - the well-established social psychological phenomenon whereby people have a difficult time detaching themselves from their own perspectives and understanding how other people will interpret them.

-Lea Winerman

American Psychological Association

Convey your thought clearly and
concisely, minimizing the cognitive
burden for your recipient as much
as you possibly can.





The good

Recipient focused

Arouse attention as soon as their seen

Respectful and kind

Clear and concise

Clear point or call to action

Timely reply

Mindfully read emails, try to not misinterpret tone

Avoid “reply all’s” that aren't relevant to all parties

Use clear and concise writing



Recipient(s)

CC: Carbon Copy

To keep others in the loop, but be mindful

Subject line

Short, sweet, and the reader should already know what the email is about

Greeting

We learned a lot about this from Enron. Simple greeting, using their name or title.

Quick question on the email presentation



Harinder Singh

Quick question on the email presentation

Hey Harinder,

Hope you are well despite the current COVID situation. While I know we are all quite busy right now, I was hoping you could help answer a quick question for me before the presentation on Wednesday.

In short, I need to write an example of an email such that I can discuss generally what could be a good example of an email. However, I am struggling to think of one to use. It would need to demonstrate a good subject line, greeting, body, and sign-off.

If you're able to help come up with ideas or write one, I'm open to all suggestions and comments. It would be great if I could have your comments by Tuesday evening, but see to it as your schedule allows.

All the best,
Keiland

Visit my corner of the web: <http://kwcooper.xyz>



Body

Open with a thesis

Not a text message; not a letter

Line break paragraphs, separate points

Stay cordial, but stay to the point

Convey a clear call to action

Reference attachments

Quick question on the email presentation



Harinder Singh

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All the best,
Keiland

Visit my corner of the web: <http://kwcooper.xyz>

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Send ▾



Sign-off

Probably the most contentious issue I've seen

'Best Wishes', 'Best', 'All the best' etc.

Some suggest to not use 'regards' or 'cheers'

Signature

Keep it classy. Add only useful info.

In 1990 sending email from your phone would be cool. but today 'sent from my iphone' isn't needed

Proof

Proofread! Proofread!

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Harinder Singh

Re: Quick question on the email presentation

Thank you for getting back to me so quickly and the tips you mentioned. No reason to apologize for not having time to write, I understand the Trader Joe's line is quite long now given the circumstances.

In fact, I realized that I could just use the message that I sent you. So all should be good for now. Hopefully the emails will seem plausible and not made up.

See you Wednesday!

Keiland

Visit my corner of the web: <http://kwcooper.xyz>



Other Advice

Reply's can be less formal

Schedule send feature

3s pause after sending

Kruger et al. 2006

- 56% success rate in detecting tone of voice in email

Email templates

There are no rules. That is how art is born, how breakthroughs happen. Go against the rules or ignore the rules. That is what invention is about.

-Helen Frankenthaler

Artist

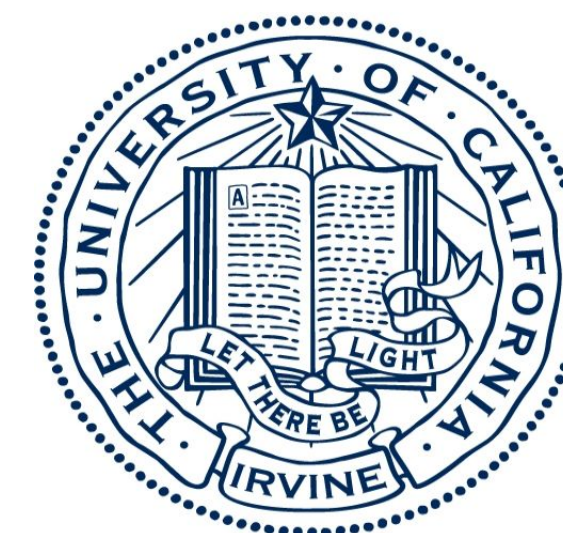


Keiland Cooper

www.kwcooper.xyz

kwcooper@uci.edu

INP | Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program



In today's business environment, regardless of the industry, communicating effectively typically means a heavy use of email and using email means being able to write... The email is often the first impression the receiver gains of the sender. A poorly written email results in a poor first impression.

-Dr. Stephanie Heald-Fisher

Chair of the Graduate Program at Globe University

Employees who have demonstrated the ability to represent themselves and the company in a clear, compelling and professional manner are more likely to be chosen for advanced positions.

-Maggie Worth

Communications Director at the Univeristy of West Georgia