

■ COMMENTARY

Advertising regulated on UseNet

Daniel J. Stern

Chris Fox's article on conducting business on UseNet (*ODE*, Jan. 31), omitted some crucial guidelines on this area of the Internet.

As Fox mentions, certain UseNet groups — usually ending in "marketplace" — focus on buying and selling. Certainly, posting a message to such a group and waiting for responses is appropriate. However, commercial advertising is violently frowned upon.

If you have a hobby — business that matches the topic of a group, such as Fox's advertising his cards on *rec.games.deckmaster.marketplace*, go for it! But commercial advertising is taboo on non-marketplace groups. It is not OK to advertise your business as if you were on television or as if you sent a flyer via bulk ("junk") mail. Don't post your advert too frequently — about every four weeks is plenty.

When posting an advert, include your e-mail address and call for people to respond by sending you e-mail rather than posting to the UseNet group where they see the advert. Posting a person-to-person message to a public forum, such as a response to an advert, wastes "bandwidth," for example, the amount of disk space, processor capacity and telecommunication transfer time it takes to send the UseNet messages all over the world.

The cumulative cost runs into thousands of dollars. In addition, such messages clutter up the public forums and irritate the users. You do not put up a flyer on a bulletin board and expect others to pin up answers — you put your phone number on the flyer so interested parties may contact you privately. Fol-

low the same procedure on the Internet.

Another verboten activity is known as "cross-posting." This is when someone posts a message not to the one or two relevant UseNet groups, but to many groups. This defeats the purpose of the thousands of different UseNet groups available and is a horrendous waste of bandwidth.

Post to the groups that deal with only your topic. For instance, many automotive-related groups exist. These include *rec.autos.antique*, *rec.autos.driving*, *rec.autos.rod-n-custom*, *rec.autos.chrysler*, *rec.autos.makers.saturn*, *rec.autos.marketplace*, *rec.autos.sport* and *rec.autos.tech*.

If you have a car to sell or are looking to buy a particular kind of car, the appropriate group is *rec.autos.marketplace*. If it is an antique car, you can cross-post to *rec.autos.antique* as well. And if you have a technical question about your Plymouth Valiant or Dodge Lancer, you can post it to *rec.autos.tech* and cross-post to *rec.autos.makers.chrysler*.

But to cross-post to all of the automotive groups wastes bandwidth and wastes people's time. *Rec.autos.makers.chrysler* readers will not help you fix your ailing Honda, and *rec.autos.sport* participants are

there for discussion of automotive sporting events. If they wanted to buy your car, they'd look in *rec.autos.marketplace*.

In order to avoid making mistakes that will turn other netters against you, it is best to read the UseNet groups in which you are interested for a week or more without posting at all. In that time, you can see the orientation of the groups and familiarize yourself with the customs that should be observed on particular groups.

You can also use that time to locate the Frequently Asked Questions file, for each group. It is important to read the FAQ (pronounced "fack") so you do not annoy people by repeating questions, which have been answered time and again, or by breaking a rule of the group.

As Fox points out, UseNet can be an effective venue for advertising. However, it must be done within the customs and rules of the groups. To do otherwise is to turn off potential customers and incur the wrath of other UseNet readers. A little "netiquette" goes a long way toward earning you a reputation as a considerate netter and will likely get you a better response to your posts, to boot.

Daniel J. Stern is a linguistics major at the University.

■ LETTERS & COMMENTARY POLICY

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* welcomes letters and commentaries from the public concerning topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

Commentaries should be between 600 and 800 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the commentary is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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CANCELED: Jim Carroll. Refunds available at place of purchase.



Skylight-to-go Menu for the week

- Monday, Feb. 27
Ping Chicken
- Tuesday, Feb. 28
Pork in Plum Sauce
- Wednesday, March 1
Broccoli Beef
- Thursday, March 2
Chicken in Bean Sauce
- Friday, March 3
Pepper Steak

Parliamentary Procedure Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised

Spring Term 1995

2 credits (P/NP or graded) • Time to be arranged

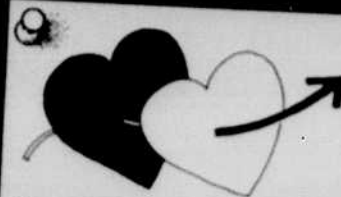
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Frank J. Geltner, Jr., Ph.D.

Member, National Association of Parliamentarians

Basic rules and principles, main motions, primary amendments, secondary amendments, ranking motions, voting and voting procedures, rules for deliberative societies, rights of members and motions designed to protect them, nominations, election of officers, committees, committee reports, annual reports, conventions and delegates, parliamentary terms.

Texts: *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, *Pointers on Parliamentary Procedure* (Texts can be purchased in class at the beginning of the term. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* is generally available in local bookstores. *Pointers* is not! About \$12 each.)



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