Email Signature Guidelines

Email signatures are the equivalent of your printed business cards – small, simple, but no-less essential to your brand and to your individual professional persona.

Using a poorly constructed email signature is like writing your name on a scrap of paper and handing it to a client or prospect – it accomplishes the task, but at what cost to professionalism?

Below are the guidelines for the University of Arkansas, and can be used as a template for your organization to standardize it's own email signature policy.

Less is more: E-mail signatures should not be longer than 10 lines. Go wider rather than longer, and use pipes (|) to separate components. Use two spaces between content and pipes.

Images and logos: Do not use images or logos within the e-mail signature. Images can come across as attachments and appear chaotic. Many e-mail clients and mobile devices block the appearance of images. Images can also increase the size of e-mail in-boxes exponentially. For those with in-box size limits, this can be problematic.

Quotes: Refraining from the use of quotes or epigraphs is best practice for professional communications. It is important to avoid the potential confusion of external audiences assuming a particular statement represents UCA's official slogan, ideology, or brand promise.

Fonts: Use a simple 12-point standard font (preferred) or your e-mail client's default font. Non-standard typefaces and HTML may not translate well across e-mail clients.

Rich text formatting: Use plain text so that the signature is compatible with all e-mail clients and devices. Avoid colors, special fonts, bold, italics, and graphics.

vCards: While vCards can be a convenient way to share contact information for some (using a .VCF compatible e-mail client), they add bytes and appear as attachments. It might be valuable to use a vCard for an initial correspondence, but sending it every time is redundant.

Standard E-mail Signature Format Samples:

Option 1 – with address

John Q. User | Director of Web Development
University of Central Arkansas | University and Government Relations
Wingo Hall 215B | 201 Donaghey Avenue | Conway, AR 72035
501-450-5721 | 555-123-1234 mobile | email@uca.edu | uca.edu

AVID: UCA dedicates itself to Academic Vitality, Integrity, and Diversity.

Option 2 – without address

John Q. User | Director of Web Development
University of Central Arkansas | University and Government Relations
501-450-5721 | 555-123-1234 mobile | email@uca.edu | uca.edu

AVID: UCA dedicates itself to Academic Vitality, Integrity, and Diversity.

E-mail is our most often used form of communication and is a reflection of the institution. The format of one’s e-mail should be professional in terms of signature and other formatting. E-mail signatures should follow certain guidelines to fit with the overall branding initiative. As such, the style of address, tone, spelling, grammar and punctuation of all messages should reflect the standards of formal business communication.