The first thing to remember about email is that just because you can send an e-mail, doesn't mean you should. The more formal the communication, the less it is appropriate for email. A good "formality test" for email is this: if you would be comfortable extending the invitation over the phone, then email is acceptable. Email is not the place for highly personal or delicate communications, which are best handled in a real-time conversation. Remember, too, that emails are not private. You should never put anything in an email that you are not willing to have the whole world read.

Email Nos:

Wedding invitations.

Because of the personal nature of a wedding invitation, it's preferable to send each guest a printed invitation unless it is a highly unusual circumstance, such as your fiancé has just been posted overseas and you have decided to marry before he leaves.

Thank you notes.

You should send a handwritten note for each gift you receive. If you are behind, you can send an email as a stop-gap measure to let the recipient know the gift has arrived and that you will be sending a formal note later. (Wonderful to see you at the wedding. We love the vase! Note to follow…")

When discussing personal or thorny issues.

Email is not private and it is a difficult medium for working out compromise or resolving emotional conflicts. Better to use the phone or talk in person.

When the groundwork hasn't been properly laid.

While it is very convenient to send out group emails about wedding related plans, make sure that all the people involved are on the same page so you don't ruffle feathers or put a damper on the event: "As mother of the groom, I am pleased to invite you to a bridal shower for my future daughter-in-law…" "Why, as mother of the bride I thought we were going to host the

shower together!” (Oops….)

Email Gos:

“Save The Date” notices.

It’s a great way to send an informal note to friends and relatives to put the date aside.

Wedding invitation replies.

It's also acceptable to give your guests the option of replying by email—just make sure it is an option. Add a printed sentence at the bottom of your printed response card: "You may also reply to: happycouple@rsvp.com." This is especially appropriate if planning a last-minute wedding, an informal wedding, or if you are in regular email contact with most of your invited guests.

Wedding announcements.

These optional notes, sent out after the wedding, typically go to friends and family who were not on the guest list, as well as acquaintances and business associates who might wish to hear the news. While most couples prefer the more formal printed announcement, it is acceptable to send email announcements, especially if you and the recipient keep in touch by email.

Invitations to informal or casual engagement parties, bridal showers, and other pre-wedding get-togethers.

These are all extremely important occasions and most couples and their families will want to honor this fact by sending out mailed invitations. Emailed invitations can be an acceptable alternative, however, particularly if you are planning an informal affair or the people on your guest list all use email regularly. This is not the time for a group email – each email should begin with an individual salutation to the intended recipient.

Information on lodging, etc.

When sending out your formal invitations, it’s also fine to include enclosures such as a map and directions for out-of-town guests. To avoid overloading the mailing, however, other material – such as information on hotels, restaurants and points of interest—can be sent in a separate mailing to those who accept. For those of your guests who are web connected, a group email using the BCC feature is ideal for sending this information. Simply begin with a general salutation – “Dear All” and sign the email as you would an individual message. It can also be posted on your wedding website, if you have one.

Wedding updates.

This is a great way to keep family and attendants up to speed on plans, but use common sense

and consideration. Don’t flood the in-boxes of your entire guest list with daily news flashes and don’t share overly personal details that are best saved for your closest friends.