

Why automated emails are a bad idea

By Will McNeice

Recently, over at a blog called [Deliberatism](#), I found a post about writing single sentence emails. The idea is that you write your email in one sentence, and add an automated piece of text explaining your intentions – namely to save time to do more important things. It sounds like a great idea, a win-win situation.

I have several problems with the idea. The first problem is that when I receive an automated message, I tune out. Does anybody really believe it

when a recorded voice tells us on the phone, “Please hold. Your call is important to us”? I always wished an honest company would add, “because we are making money from the phone call while you are on hold.” An automated message from a company is bad enough, but from an individual, it tells you exactly how much time that person has for you. In this instance, one sentence of time.

The second problem is that the world in general is becoming increasingly standardised. When I receive a personal message from somebody these days, it’s the exception, and it makes my day. You don’t have to be long-winded and exceedingly polite, you just have to acknowledge that the person you are emailing is a human being and worthy of your attention.

Nevertheless, to help the project, I have created my own automated email response, together with some example situations in which the response might be used. Feel free to take them and use them as your own:

Example 1

Dear you,

Thank you for your email. This is an automated email response. The reason you have received an automated email response is because I wish to spend my time doing more important things other than writing emails to you. What those things are, I cannot say, although you may check my Facebook and Twitter statuses for more information than you will find in this email.

This automated email response is part of a one sentence email project, where the aim is to write an email in just one sentence, to free up people's time for the above-mentioned activities. Do not take it personally that I have chosen not to communicate with you on a human level, and certainly do not notice the irony that while I am not prepared to waste my time writing you a proper email, I am prepared to waste your time by asking you to read this automated email response.

Your one sentence, which I have drafted quickly without regard to spellchecking or grammar, is as follows:

Tim, sorry to hear your dad died.

Example 2

Dear you,

Thank you for your email. This is an automated email response. The reason you have received an automated email response is because I wish to spend my time doing more important things other than writing emails to you. What those things are, I cannot say, although you may check my Facebook and Twitter statuses for more information than you will find in this email.

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proper email, I am prepared to waste your time by asking you to read this automated email response.

Your one sentence, which I have drafted quickly without regard to spellchecking or grammar, is as follows:

Jennifer, I think we should break up.

Example 3

Dear you,

Thank you for your email. This is an automated email response. The reason you have received an automated email response is because I wish to spend my time doing more important things other than writing emails to you. What those things are, I cannot say, although you may check my Facebook and Twitter statuses for more information than you will find in this email.

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certainly do not notice the irony that while I am not prepared to waste my time writing you a proper email, I am prepared to waste your time by asking you to read this automated email response.

Your one sentence, which I have drafted quickly without regard to spellchecking or grammar, is as follows:

Mr. Carter, I lost all your retirement money in a bad investment. Sorry, dude!

You can contribute to the one sentence email project at Deliberatism.com.

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