

Chapter 7 — Memos and E-mail

The e-mail begins with standard date/to/from/subject information.

The message focuses on one main subject—the discussion about the spelling conventions.

The message is put into context in the first paragraph.

The tone of the message is friendly and informal, yet it respectfully conveys the opinion of others. The wink symbol at the end suggests the comments should be taken in a lighter vein.

Date: May 31, 2004
To: Documentation Staff
From: Susan DaCosta (susan.dacosta@M&K.com)
Subject: **American versus Canadian Spelling Conventions**

Hi Everyone,

Thank you for your comments and suggestions in last week's meeting about spelling conventions in our user guides. I spoke to the Product Manager, Barbara Snelling, about the team's preference for Canadian spellings over American ones. I made your point that we are a Canadian company, so we should be using Canadian spelling.

Barbara made the point that over 90% of our customer base is American, and that we should try to accommodate our clients as much as possible. Using spelling conventions that the vast majority of our customers are not accustomed to might be a distraction for them as readers of our documentation. In a follow-up meeting, the editors said that they would accept any decision as long as they were given a style sheet of the words that would be affected.

As writers, our top priority is our client base, so we should be writing for them. Therefore, we should follow Barbara's advice and use American spelling conventions.

I'll prepare a list of affected terms in our documentation and bring it to our 10 am meeting tomorrow. Thanks again for all your input on this issue—it's nice too see that M&K has so many loyal Canadians! ;-)

Susan

Sample 7-1

An Effective E-mail Message