

Six trends I don't want to see in 2016

I don't know what happened to 2015. It started with such potential, all shiny and bright (and cold here in the Washington, DC area). And it went downhill fast.

Here are six "trends" that were everywhere in 2015 and that I hope we don't see in the coming year:

1. Overuse of emojis and gifs (they are especially egregious in professional communications). Oxford Dictionary even chose an emoji as "word" of the year. Enough said.

2. Multiple emails asking for money, especially on New Year's Eve (today alone I have already deleted at least a dozen) from organizations that have already sent multiple emails at Thanksgiving, on Giving Tuesday, before Christmas, after Christmas. If I wanted to give, I would have already.

3. And speaking of email, too many were **not responsive/mobile-friendly**. This wasn't good in 2015 and it certainly won't fly in 2016. Most people read email on their smartphones or tablets. Deal with it.

4. Auto-video/audio on websites. This year I felt that every website I went on had a (loud, obnoxious) video pop-up. Having the video or audio auto-play ensures I will click out of your website really fast.

5. Over-capitalization. In American English, we have simple rules for capitalizing words: we use capitals to start a sentence and in proper names. We don't capitalize to show something is important, even if it sounds important (e.g., "we elect a president every four years" not "we elect a President every four years"). And unlike Germans, we don't capitalize every single noun.

And last, but not least:

6. Obsessive news coverage and its partner, endless speculating. It didn't start this year, and probably won't end this year, but we saw too many examples of obsessive coverage of selected news stories this year. Going all out on one news story, like the Paris bombings, sending every reporter and anchor to the scene, and then providing all sorts of baseless "analysis" does not qualify as actual journalism. It does not clarify the story. Instead, it gives rise to fear and uncertainty. This is what's given rise to blowhard politicians such as the millionaire real estate developer who will say the most outrageous things because he knows it will attract attention and speculation.

What trends got your goat in 2015? Share them in the comments.

Let's hope for a better 2016. Happy New Year everybody!