



and formal communications. But, deciding who reads which email communications is a family matter. To help with these decisions, we propose the following rating system to be attached to each email:

1. All emails concerning lost *tallis* bags, your mother-in-law's apartment for rent in Florida, and meetings of the *eruv* committee: *Rated PB* — for "Profoundly Boring."
2. All emails concerning volunteering, opportunities to engage in social action and justice work, and all possible forms of adult education: *Rated MBG: Moderately Boring with a high Guilt factor.*
3. Personal assaults, however veiled and indirect, aimed at shoe size, toothpaste preference, or any other personal matter, including whether or not you believe in God: *Rated NPN* — *Nis pasnisht*. The consequence for this sin shall be a committee of technical nerds coming to your house under cover of night and pulling all of your plugs.

Joan Leegant lives, writes, and makes jokes in Newton, MA, where she's a member of the Newton Center Minyan.

More on the Chicken and the Egg Controversy

The intractability of this problem is due to the vagueness of ordinary language. Solution: a purified symbolic format. Let 'c' be the chicken and 'e' be the egg. The fog of confusion and uncertainty begins to lift a little. But what of temporal priority — the 'came first' element? One solution: throw in our lot with those who deny the reality of time. That would dissolve the problem but leave us with a worse one: everything would be happening at once. Far better to define a two-place relation 'B,' and let 'Bxy' stand for 'x came before y.' We now only need to replace the problematic 'or' — with its annoying inclusive/exclusive ambiguity — with the 'v' symbol so beloved of logicians, to arrive at our reconceptualization: "Bce v Bec?" Have we indeed solved the problem yet? Not quite, but the road is clear; 'mopping up' is left as an exercise for the reader. (NB: The famous chicken-crossing-road problem yields to a similar attack.)

Jerry Samet, a philosophy professor at Brandeis University, loves introducing the uninitiated into the mysteries of philosophy. Reach him at samet@brandeis.edu for deeper initiation and to request the full solution to this problem.

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