

I DON'T THINK LUDDITE MEANS WHAT CNN THINKS IT MEANS

CNN's
Security
Clearance
blog thinks
it has
exposed Janet
Napolitano as
a Luddite.

2011 exemptions used by Cabinet agencies	
Department	Number of exemptions
Homeland Security	231,634
Defense	30,861
Justice	23,916
Labor	20,242
State	19,791
Veterans Affairs	15,130
Health & Human Serv.	7,890
Treasury	6,383
Transportation	4,086
Agriculture	3,729
Interior	2,039
Education	1,629
Energy	750
Commerce	673
Housing & Urban Dev.	664

Napolitano said she does not use email
“at all.”

“For a whole host of reasons. So, I
don’t have any of my own accounts and
that, you know, I’m very secure,”

Napolitano noted at a Washington
conference about cyber security.

“Some would call me a Luddite but you
know. But that’s my own personal choice
and I’m very unique in that regard I
suspect,” Napolitano added.

Of course, she’s not unique at all and—given her
fondness for highly sophisticated data
mining—not a Luddite.

CNN might consider two things before they
conclude Napolitano doesn’t have email because
she eschews technology. First, the graphic
above, which Bloomberg put together to show how
unresponsive Obama’s Administration is to FOIA
requests. Part of the reason why DHS claims so
many FOIA exemptions is the sheer number of

FOIAs they get. But there have been other examples to show that Napolitano's agency doesn't much like transparency.

And then consider why other people who don't use—or claim not to use—email did so. People like Scooter Libby, whose office also happened to disappear a good number of emails responsive to a criminal investigation. The most logical explanation for someone—particularly someone who avoids transparency in general—to avoid email is because it is FOIAable, it serves as a record of discussions that might be embarrassing.

So my guess is that one of the main reasons why Napolitano doesn't use email is to avoid getting into trouble with it.

After all, like Scooter Libby, she knows as well as anyone the kinds of things the government and others can find in someone's email box.