

Netiquette Guidelines

In an online environment it is not possible for others to read your body language, tone of voice, or facial expressions. Therefore, a special set of rules has emerged for online communications, called *Netiquette*. Here are some basic Netiquette rules that should be followed during online discussion board, chat sessions, or e-mail:

- Never give your user ID or password to another person.
- Sometimes a good way of entering a discussion board or chat is to briefly introduce yourself.
- Before posting to a discussion board, you should read prior messages to get a sense of the flow and language of the discussion.
- Always title your messages. Be sure the subject line reflects the topic of discussion. Do not auto-reply and start a new thread leaving the old subject line in the header.
- Always check your spelling before posting a message to a discussion board. It will be the first impression you may make on someone, so it is important that your message be free of spelling errors. However, if you are on a synchronous chat, correct spelling would be nice but not as much expected, as the conversation goes much faster.
- Keep your questions and comments relevant to the topic of the discussion. If another person posts a comment or question that is off the subject, do NOT reply to the discussion board. If you want to reply, do so in private e-mail directly to the original poster.
- Do not use ALL CAPS. It gives the impression that you are shouting. Capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title or heading. *Asterisks* surrounding a word can also be used to make a stronger point.
- Keep paragraphs and messages short and to the point.
- Know what you are talking about and make sense. Make sure your postings contain correct information. Try not to post comments that don't add anything to the discussion.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions within the course discussion group, or to share what you know. It's especially considerate to share the answers to your questions with others. Also, if you've researched a topic that you think would be of interest to others, summarize it and post it to the group.
- Cite all quotes, references and sources and respect copyright and license agreements.
- If you do post a different view point, first acknowledge what someone else has said. If you disagree with someone, it is better to start a message by briefly

restating what the other person has said in your own words. This lets the other person know that you are trying to understand him/her.

- When presenting a controversial point of view, state whose view it is. For example, if it is your opinion, you can begin with “in my experience....” or “IMHO...” (in my humble opinion). If it is a view of someone else, you can begin with “according to NAEYC...”, or “the president’s view is....”
- When you post or e-mail a question, make it as easy as possible for others to understand what you ask and help you. Make sure your question is clear and specific, and provide as much information as possible. Also, make sure that you later check replies to your question and answer to them if necessary.
- Treat the others on the discussion board in a polite and respectful manner. Never mail or post anything you wouldn’t say to your reader’s face. Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life.
- Try to stay calm and do not get offended easily. If you feel the need to send an angry message, take a break. If you write the message out, do not send it immediately. Save it. Then, look at it later and try to rewrite it with a milder tone.
- Do not “flame” others on the discussion board. Flaming is the act of responding in a highly critical, sarcastic, or ridiculing manner - especially if done on a personal level. Remember that these discussions are meant for constructive exchanges and learning.
- When quoting another person, edit out whatever isn’t directly applicable to your reply. Do not quote the entire body of messages you are replying to when it isn’t necessary. Take the time to edit any quotations down to the minimum necessary to provide the context for your reply.
- E-mail messages should be considered private and not shared with others or quoted without permission. However, whatever you post to a newsgroup or discussion board is public. You never know who might read what you posted. Others may copy and send it to others, although it would be better to ask first.
- Do not send “Me Too!”, “Thank You”, etc. messages to the group. Send those directly to the original poster. A private “Thank You” is nicer too!
- Advertisements and spam messages are not permitted on online course discussion boards.
- Sometimes emoticons are used to express emotion:
 - smile :) or :-)
 - wink ;)
 - frown :(
 - I’m confused %-)
- A few abbreviations that are commonly used are:
 - FYI = for your information
 - BTW = By the way

- IMO = In My Opinion
 - IMHO = In my humble opinion (This is a good non-offensive way of expressing ones own opinion.)
 - LOL = laugh out loud
 - BRB = be right back
 - CYA = see you later
 - OT = Off Topic
 - OTOH = On the other hand
 - F2F = Face to face
 - <g> = grin
- Be careful about posting late at night or any time you are tired, sick, or having a terrible day. Your judgment may not be at its best during those times. When in doubt, postpone sending your message until you feel better.

REFERENCES:

“Email/Discussion Group Netiquette Tips”

<<http://earlydues.usanethosting.com/ieel/netiquette.htm> >

“Netiquette: A guide to respectful behavior on the Internet”

<<http://www.state.vt.us/srs/fwc/netiquette.html> >

“Netiquette” by Virginia Shea (1994).

<<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/book/index.html> >

“The Net: User Guidelines and Netiquette” by Arlene H. Rinaldi

<<http://www.cs.biu.ac.il/home/leagal/netguide/index.html> >