

The Basics of Netiquette

Etiquette is a code of social behavior. It includes behavior expectations or norms within a society, social class, or group. Netiquette is how our social codes of behavior look in an online environment. Here are some of the basics. Some of these guidelines may be repeated in various forms, but they are important to emphasize:

1. Writing in all caps in an online environment is the same as shouting. Don't SHOUT
 2. Remember: The person on the other end of a digital communication can't see your expression or hear your tone of voice.
 3. Cool off before responding to messages in anger. You will probably regret what you wrote and it is hard to take it back once it is written and sent.
 4. Check messages for misspellings or misstatements.
 5. Respect others' privacy and your own (for example, don't give your number to that new Snapchat follower or Facebook friend).
 6. Use a clear and understandable email subject line.
 7. Adjust your tone and style to the situation (for example, don't use text shorthand or all lowercase letters in an email).
 8. Don't forward private messages to people they weren't intended for or copy others on replies to personal messages.
- Remember:** Email is never really private and a copy may exist in cyberspace... forever.
9. Keep messages short and to the point.
 10. No email system is totally private -- think of an email message as a postcard being sent through the U.S. Postal Service. It is unwise to send very personal or sensitive information through email.
 11. A good rule of thumb to use with email is, don't put it in email if you would be embarrassed by your message being read out loud to your mother or grandmother in a crowd of people.
 12. Pay attention to grammar and spelling. Though email is less formal than a report for class, people will form an opinion of you based on how you write.
 13. Sign all your emails with your name to avoid confusion. Don't assume people receiving your email will recognize your nickname, or just a first name.

Courtesy

- Before sending a message, consider whether you would say what you have written to

the person's face. The detached nature of email will sometimes embolden people to say things they would never say in person.

- Instead of hitting Send when you are angry or hurt, you may consider pressing the 'Save to Drafts' button instead. . . . You can then come back and open the message later to review it when you are calm, and then edit if necessary before sending the message.
- It is much easier to delay sending an email than it is to try to repair the damage from a hurtful message.
- If you really can't help typing a furious response, don't send it immediately. Walk around the block, do some homework or watch TV, then reread your message and tone it down before sending it.

Replying

- Pay careful attention to where your reply is going; don't hit "reply all" if you really only want to respond to sender. If a personal message ends up on a mailing list or listserv, it may be embarrassing for you and annoying for the other list members.

Protecting Your Email Address

- You will invite spam to your inbox if you post your email address to random web pages. Only post your email on sites where you are registering to use a web tool, or a trusted site you use regularly. Do not use your email address to enter online contests or other drawing like events.

For Social Networking: Keep these general tips in mind whenever you log on to Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, or any public sites where you are posting or contributing to discussion.

Act like you would in real life: Just because you're hiding behind a computer or phone as you type doesn't mean that people aren't going to connect what you say online with who you are as a real person. How you act on social media sites is often the most direct way that people — including potential employers — will perceive you.

Be extra polite: You wouldn't make a nasty comment to a person you just met at work or school. In a face--to--face situation you'd probably want to seem friendly and helpful. Apply the same attitude to your social media activity.

Don't ask for favors: Once you've established a relationship with an online contact, you can ask for advice or help, but don't log on just to ask people to do your work for you.

Follow the Golden Rule: Treat others the way you want to be treated, and you'll

develop a reputation for being a worthy friend.

Remember that there are boundaries: Not everyone you're following — or who is following you — is your personal friend, so avoid talking about health problems and mushy stuff.

Facebook

These Facebook-specific rules address photos, tagging, and all those applications.

Don't cyber-stalk: If you're never getting any responses back to the wall posts and messages you leave on someone's profile, then you're cyber-stalking them. Stop.

Don't send apps: Make sure that when you try out an application, you're not sending it to everyone you're friends with. That's right: everyone.

Don't write private messages on wall posts: It's embarrassing, rude, and makes you look immature. That's what the messages button is for – private stuff.

Edit your photo choices: Don't put up photos of yourself or others engaging in illegal, or irresponsible activities, whether or not you're 21.

Be careful who you tag: Just because you think it's funny doesn't mean your friends are okay with having ridiculous photos of themselves posted on Facebook so that their moms or even bosses can see them.

Write clear status updates: People who write vague, depressing song lyrics or status updates come across as self-indulgent.

Be respectful of the relationship status: Talk with your partner before changing a relationship status. If it's good news, do you want an online medium like Facebook to be the one to announce it? If it's bad, you want to make sure you're not breaking up with someone via Facebook.

Avoid chain status updates: Don't fall for chain status updates to save a child with cancer or promote world peace. If these are issues you truly care about, go out and raise money for them or volunteer your time. Reposting them on Facebook does absolutely nothing to help the cause, and these kinds of status updates are annoying.

Grammar and Communication: There are appropriate shortcuts for social media and texting, but don't go overboard. Otherwise, no one will be able to understand you, and they may think you're lazy and ignorant.

Know what @ means: @ (which you get by hitting shift + 2) is a sign that means you're responding to or directly addressing a particular user or message. On some sites, it even tags that person.

Use the word, not the number: Substituting "2" for "to" looks like you're in junior

high. Social media like Facebook is a step up from texting, and email is a step up from social media: If you're typing on a keyboard, you can type out the whole word. Social media is more formal than texting. Email is more formal than social media.

Don't make stupid mistakes: You're not receiving an official grade from your status updates, but you are being judged on your grammar and spelling mistakes.

Edit your work: Before you hit that button, take a few seconds to review your messages so that you can correct any mistakes.

Avoid excessive exclamation points: They're warranted sometimes, but punctuation marks are annoying to read and make your writing look juvenile.

Always be honest: With so many distractions going on online, keep your messages short, clear and truthful.

Know which rules you can break: Regular abbreviations and certain punctuation marks can be used more freely on social media sites. Sometimes when emailing very close friends, certain abbreviations or more informal writing can be okay. Just remember to make sure your message is clear and will be taken as you intended it.

AND FINALLY...

Don't be a Keyboard Gangsta (AKA Internet Troll): Probably the worst thing about the Internet is the keyboard gangstas and internet trolls. You've surely run across at least one of these in your lifetime... They sit at their keyboard talking trash to everyone they encounter. They say things online that they would never have the nerve to say to a real person's face. Don't try to ruin everyone else's online experience because you are unhappy with yourself.

Add Value to the Site: At the end of the day, the thing that will earn you great connections with others is if you add value to the community. This means not submitting content that nobody cares about and not constantly promoting yourself.

Don't Sabotage Other's Efforts: This is self-explanatory. Drop all of your e-beefs and hatred. Don't try to bury others just for the sake of getting ahead. Making enemies on social media sites will get you nowhere fast, and you really do reap what you sow.

Listen to Others: Your first reaction whenever someone disagrees with you online is probably to tell them how wrong they are. Instead of constantly fighting back, take the time to listen to what they're really saying. Listen to the people commenting on your blog or your status. Understand where they're coming from. You don't know everything, and you can learn from others if you take the time to listen.

Be Accountable for Your Actions: Because of the anonymity the Internet allows, there is little to no accountability online. People say and do whatever they please without facing

any repercussions. Don't be that person. Instead, try to be honorable by taking responsibility for your actions online. By being accountable, people will respect you, whether they agree with you or not.

Be Nice: All of these points add up to one thing—just be nice. Is it really too much to ask for people to be kind to one another?

References: These guidelines were collected and adapted from the following sources:

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