Netiquette

The term “netiquette” is used to refer to online etiquette over networks, such as online communities, forums, and online learning environments.

Following the rules of netiquette improves the readability of your messages, lays the groundwork for making trustworthy connections and helps other people to better understand you.

Here are a few guidelines to help you follow proper netiquette:

Stay on topic. While discussion is encouraged, rambling conversations aren’t conducive to a quality experience. Make sure you read the questions carefully before responding.

Use appropriate subject lines in your replies. As a conversation evolves, it’s helpful to change the subject line of a threaded message to reflect the changing topic. For example, if the subject line reads "Participation requirements" and the conversation evolves into a discussion on attendance, changing the subject line to “Attendance” in your reply would help others interested in the topic to join the conversation.

Avoid "I agree" and "Me, too!" messages. Spending time reading messages without substance can be frustrating for all parties.

Avoid posting messages using all caps. (IT'S LIKE SHOUTING!) It’s OK to use all caps occasionally to emphasize a point, but you should only capitalize the individual words you want to highlight, not the entire sentence or paragraph.

Avoid slang and sarcasm. People who don't know you may misinterpret its meaning.

Use appropriate language. Avoid coarse, rough, or rude language. Observe good grammar and spelling.

Include citations and/or references. Always include citations and/or references to support your own ideas and statements and strengthen your arguments. Make sure to note where you got the information in order to avoid plagiarism.

Carefully choose the format for your messages. Long paragraphs are difficult for other people to follow on-screen. In general, try to limit each paragraph to five to seven lines and avoid using font styles, colors and sizes that are difficult to read. Please also avoid using stationery because it takes longer to download.

Be friendly. Remember that even though you can’t see the person you’re connecting with online, you’re still connecting with someone. Before posting a comment, ask yourself “Would I say this to a person face to face?” If the answer is “no,” don’t post it.

Avoid responding when emotions are running high. If you’re angry about something someone has posted, don’t reply to their message until you’ve had a chance to calm down. Remember, your posted messages can be seen by everyone, even potential employers.

Avoid the tendency to prove your point of view is the right one. Instead, read and think critically about what others have to say.

Before posting anyone's picture on any social networking site, get the person's permission. Give your friends, family members and co-workers the opportunity to control their digital self.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations and acronyms are commonly used in online communications to quickly express words and phrases that we use in everyday conversation but be careful not to overuse them. Abbreviations and acronyms that are frequently used online include:

BTW	By the way
FYI	For your information
IMO	In my opinion
IMHO	In my humble opinion
IMNSHO	In my not-so-humble opinion
OIC	Oh, I see
OTOH	On the other hand
ROTFL	Rolling on the floor, laughing
LOL	Laughing out loud
TIA	Thanks, in advance
<g>	Grin

Emoticons

Writers often use "emoticons" to convey their feelings in electronic communications like text messages, e-mails and message boards. Emoticons blend text and punctuation together to visually portray facial expressions.

Tilt your head slightly to the left to read the following emoticons.

:-)	Smiling
;-)	Winking and smiling
:-D	Laughing
:-(	Frown
:-o	Oh!