

Netiquette Tip Sheet

What is netiquette and how do I use it?

Netiquette is a word that describes the *do's* and *don'ts* of online communicating. Basic courtesy and common sense are generally the rule of the day when communicating whether face-to-face or through the Internet. However, the Internet does have a few guidelines that are particular to itself.

The core rules of netiquette below are quoted from [Virginia Shea's Netiquette book and website](#).

Rule 1: Remember the human. Keep in mind that you are communicating with real people. Don't say something online that you wouldn't feel comfortable saying to someone's face.

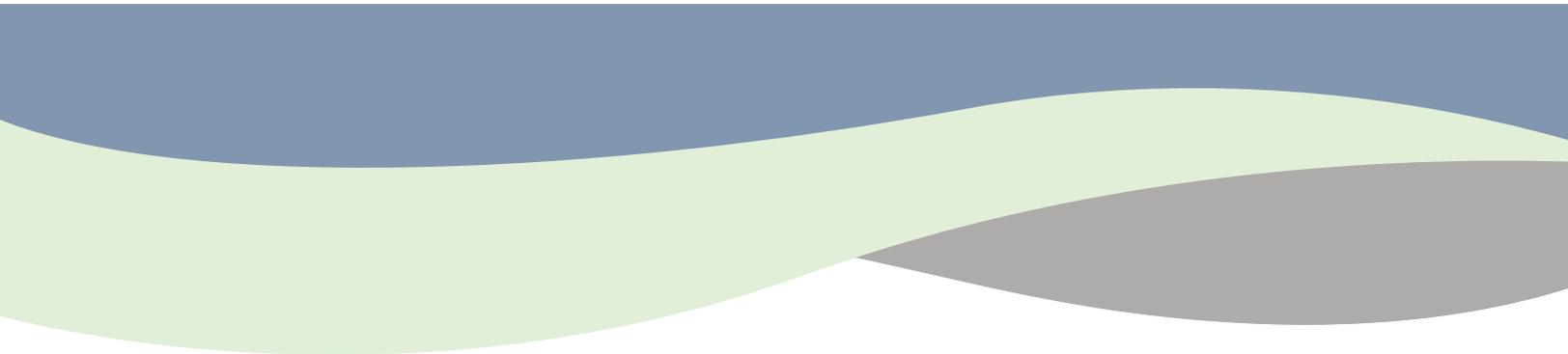
Rule 2: Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life. Remember to be ethical in all your interactions. Do not share images or text online unless you created them or have the creators' permission to share them. More information can be found on the [Choosing Instructional Materials & Technologies Tip Sheet](#).

Rule 3: Know where you are in cyberspace. Just as rules vary from place to place, Netiquette rules will vary from cyberplace to cyberplace. Take the time to learn the rules and follow them.

Rule 4: Respect other people's time and bandwidth. Remember that emails and postings take up not only bandwidth, but also time. Don't waste people's time by sending them unnecessary emails, filling your online communication with needless graphics, or by filling it full of unnecessary chatter. Be respectful of others' time.

Rule 5: Make yourself look good online. Remember that communication online is almost 100% text-based. This means that your written word is the only representation of you. Make sure that you make yourself look as good as possible by checking your grammar and spelling. Also make sure that your thoughts are coherent and to the point.

Rule 6: Share expert knowledge. If you want to participate in online communities, be willing to share your expertise. This is one of the things that makes the Internet so great: so many experts are available to answer questions like never before!



Rule 7: Help keep flame wars under control. Unfortunately we do not live in Utopia. It's more than likely that people will get upset with each other in cyberspace. This is where flaming comes into play. Flaming is the practice of expressing exactly what you feel without regard to tact or the feelings of others. Invariably, someone will take exception to this free expression of opinion and a flame war ensues. As cybercitizens, it's our duty to not egg on these little displays of temper.

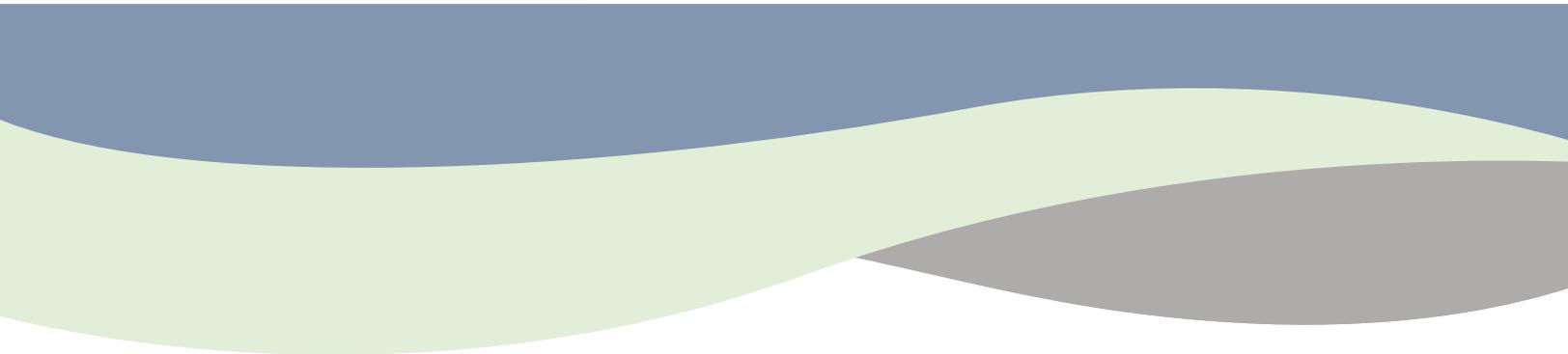
Rule 8: Respect other people's privacy. Do not read others' email. Do not forward private emails without permission of the sender. Be respectful of others.

Rule 9: Don't abuse your power. If you happen to be a person who has some power in an electronic environment, don't abuse that power.

Rule 10: Be forgiving of other people's mistakes. Remember that everyone is human and may make mistakes. Just as you would like to be forgiven for an occasional mistake, you should be willing to forgive mistakes in others.

Some other useful netiquette rules:

- **DO NOT USE ALL CAPITALS.** On the Internet, this is the equivalent of screaming at someone.
- Don't send an attachment when you could put the text in the body of the message. Not everyone can open your attachment and, in these days of viruses, many are afraid to open attachments.
- Video clips, photos, and other graphics can help convey tone, add a personal touch, build community, and make an idea or message more memorable. However, these elements can also be messy and hard to access from slower Internet connections. Use images and humor wisely, and be careful not to offend your audience.
- Be deliberate about formal and informal communication. Most abbreviations belong only in informal writing; even common texting abbreviations should be avoided in more formal online spaces or discussions. Emojis (small digital icons or images used to convey ideas or emotions) can help build team spirit and convey a positive mood. You might use emojis in an online chat or discussion with a classmate or coworker but avoid them when emailing your boss or completing a class assignment.

- 
- Do not spam your classmates. Spam is more than just a rather untasty looking luncheon meat. In this case, it is the practice of sending unsolicited emails usually trying to sell something. This is not an ethical practice.
 - Small or ornate text can be difficult to read. Use sans serif fonts with a font size of 12 points (pts) or higher. Limit the number of fonts and font variations such as bold, italics, and all caps. Do not rely on font color, size, or variation to convey meaning. For more information see the [Accessibility Tip Sheet](#).