Netiquette

Netiquette is a term used to describe proper etiquette on the Internet. For the most part it refers to accepted practices for composing and sending e-mail, newsgroup messages, and listserv messages—and participating in chat rooms. Following are guidelines that are considered important by experienced Internet users. Share these guidelines with your students, as appropriate.

Netiquette
The generally accepted code of behavior on the Internet.

Use a Subject Line

Always include a subject line in your message. The recipient will know, at a glance, what's coming and will be able to recognize the message in the future.

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- Use a Subject Line
- Use Proper Capitalization
- Spelling and Grammar Matter
- Use the Quote Feature in Your Replies
- Limit Use of Shortcuts
- Don't Send Private Information
- Don't Be Rude or Offensive
- Give Credit Where It's Due
- Don't Break the Law

Use Proper Capitalization

Don't type your message in all uppercase or all lowercase letters; it makes your message difficult to read. In e-mail and chat-room messages, all capital letters indicate that someone is "shouting."

Spelling and Grammar Matter

Poorly worded, misspelled messages are hard to read, can be confusing, and make an unfavorable impression. Use correct grammar and spelling.

Use the Quote Feature in Your Replies

When replying to an e-mail message, include enough of the original message to provide the reader with context—but it is not necessary to resend the entire original message.

Limit Use of Shortcuts

To save time and typing, people tend to use shortcuts to convey emotions and commonly used phrases when communicating over the Internet. When making jokes or trying to convey emotions, some people use **emoticons**, symbols made out of keyboard characters. Some examples are

> :-)   smile
> :-(frown
> ;-)   wink

Common acronyms include BTW (by the way) and IMHO (in my humble opinion). While these shortcuts are harmless up to a point, encourage students to convey their feelings through their writing.

Emoticons
Symbols made out of keyboard characters, used to convey emotions.

Don't Send Private Information

Never assume that your e-mail message is private, even if you send it to only one person. Others may be able to read what you write. Never send anything that you wouldn't mind reading in your local newspaper or seeing on a TV news program—with your name as the author! Likewise, don't forward a personal message that you received to others without first getting the author's consent.

Don't Be Rude or Offensive

When you communicate via computer, remember that there is a person (or many persons) who will receive your writing. Some Internet users feel a freedom to write whatever they want without regard to others' feelings. Instead, imagine the face of the person you are writing to, and don't write things you wouldn't say to that person's face. Remember: your words go out into cyberspace and can be forwarded many times—and they may come back to haunt you!

Give Credit Where It's Due

This is especially important when doing research. Most work that someone has placed on the Internet is free for you to use—but if you do use it, give the writer or creator credit.

Don't Break the Law

There are many software products available on the Internet. Many of these products are offered free of charge. Be sure the software product you are downloading is not a commercial product that has been distributed illegally. Most commercial software products have a title screen with a copyright statement.