

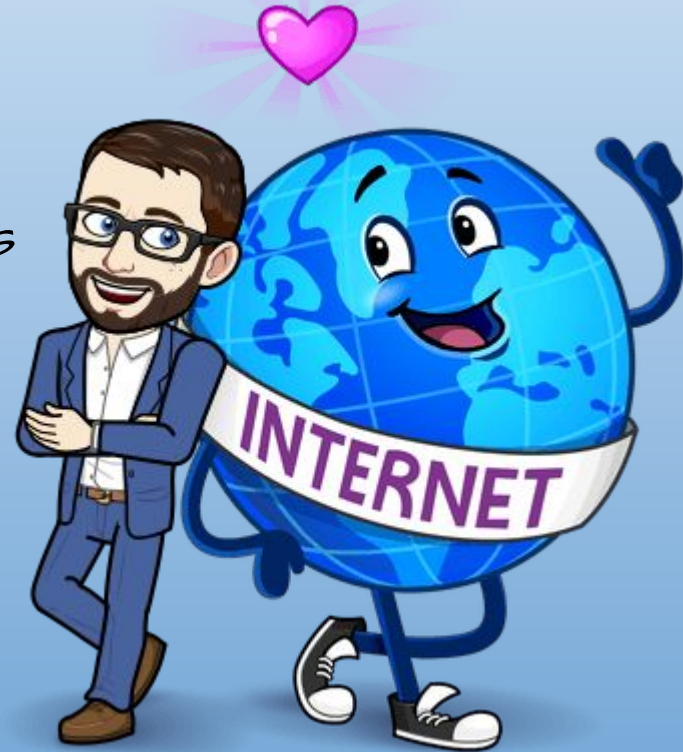
Netiquette

What it is and why it is important



Rules of Internet Etiquette

1. Remember the Human
2. Be ethical
3. Know who you are
4. Respect other people's time and data limits
5. Make yourself look good online
6. Share expert knowledge
7. Keep disagreements healthy
8. Respect other people's privacy
9. Don't abuse your power
10. Be forgiving of other people's mistakes



I. Remember the Human

People you are interacting with online are real humans and not disembodied usernames or profile pictures.

You should never say something to someone online that you would not say to him or her in person.

It is also useful to remember that online interactions are nearly always recorded and backed up.

If you act inappropriately, these recordings will serve as evidence against you.

2. Be Ethical

Illegal downloading of music and copyright infringement is breaking the law. It is the online equivalent of shoplifting. These activities are a huge loss of revenue for artists and companies. Artists, companies, internet providers and law enforcement agencies are continuing to prosecute people who illegally access and/or their material. Breaking the law is bad netiquette.

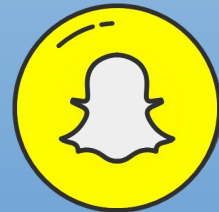
Just like any other decisions we make, what we do online has ethical implications. These ethical choices are not necessarily associated with law, but the decisions you make online demonstrate your ethical stances. For example, if you use a program like AdBlocker, you are cutting off the revenue streams of the websites you visit. This includes small and independent websites just as much as it affects larger corporations. Think carefully about what kind of digital citizen you want to be!

3. Know Who You Are

Netiquette varies from website to website. What is acceptable in one environment is not acceptable in another.

For example, the way you behave on school websites and discussion forums will be very different to how you behave on a social network like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

One good piece of advice comes from Shea (2011) "lurk before you leap". When you approach a new website, watch and monitor how people communicate and interact. Once you have observed their behaviour and have an idea of what is acceptable feel free to join in!



4. Respect Time and Data

When you post anything online, write an email or share a post it will take other people's time to read.

With modern technology, it is too easy to send a message to everybody in your contact list. Instead, you need to spend time focusing your message and sending it to the relevant people.

Social networks can help you achieve that by focusing your contributions towards appropriate networks. Facebook is great for personal stuff whereas ResearchGate is better for academic discussions.

4. Respect Time and Data

When considering data limits or bandwidth, it is important to acknowledge storage and network speed limitations. This issue is still very relevant as people may be accessing the internet through mobile networks, broadband or fiber optic.

If you are sending something, you need to be conscious of how the receiver will access the file. Large files can take some time and people need the capacity to store what they have downloaded. You can save people's data limit and time by being considerate with what you send or share.

Compress files where appropriate, ensure you only send things across once and send it to the people who need it.

5. Present Yourself Well

Make sure you are careful with what you share. Do not share anything embarrassing, illegal or inappropriate. Anyone can look you up online. Make sure you set a good impression.

Always ensure that what you write and share is understandable and grammatically correct. It makes it hard for others to read your work if it is not communicated properly.

Online interactions can be a great leveller. Unless you share personal information, your attributes like your gender, weight, general appearance, name, religion and race will be unknown to those you interact with. You can take advantage of this anonymity.

6. Share Expert Knowledge

Sharing is one of the principles behind the majority of internet services.

If you are knowledgeable in an area then you have something to offer! Share what you know and it will help other users. You can share your experiences as part of this - both positive and negative. If you have made any mistakes, sharing these can help prevent others from doing the same.

You should never post anything disingenuous online. In the online environment, it is very easy for untruths, errors and mistakes to become accepted as fact and propagated. You have responsibility to ensuring the accuracy of your contributions. If you are sharing opinion or ideas, make sure it is clear to your audience.

7. Keep Disagreement Healthy

People are always going to disagree and that is healthy. Such disagreements can be about heated issues like politics, religion and philosophy or they can be relatively trivial. When involved in any such a debate, it is important to be respectful of the other people involved.

Never reduce the discussion to personal issues and avoid inappropriate language. If you are going to provide negative comments, ensure they are constructive and useful.

8. Respect Their Privacy

When you are networked to someone on a website like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, you may be given privileged access to information about him or her and what he or she shares.

You need to ensure you do not breach anyone's wishes by sharing any of the content they have made available to you.

It is also worth mentioning that you should not use anyone else's computers, mobile devices or accounts without their permission.

9. Don't Abuse Your Power

If you know something personal about someone else, do not share that information online.

If you are an administrator or facilitator for any online environment, make sure you do not abuse the privilege of access that your position may give you



10. Forgive Mistakes

People will make mistakes when they are new to online environments. Everyone has to start somewhere, so try and be forgiving of other people's' mistakes.

Not everyone is an excellent speller or writer

APOLOGIZE

