

The Core Rules of netiquette

∞ Remember the Human

Do unto others as you'd have others do unto you. When you write an electronic message, think before you hit that send button: *Would you say it to the person's face?*

∞ Be Ethical

People sometimes forget that there's a human being on the other side of the computer. Some people think that a lower standard of ethics or personal behaviour is acceptable in cyberspace. *It is Not!*

∞ Know Where you are in Cyberspace

Netiquette varies from domain to domain. When you enter a domain of cyberspace that's new to you, take a look around. Spend a while 'listening' to the chat. Get a sense of how the people who are already there act. Then go ahead and participate.

∞ Respect other people's Time and Bandwidth

When you send email or post to a discussion group, you're taking up other people's time (or hoping to). It's your responsibility to ensure that the time they spend reading your posting isn't wasted.

We sometimes find ourselves copying people almost out of habit. In general, this is rude. Before you copy people on your messages, ask yourself whether they really need to know. If the answer is no, don't waste their time. If the answer is maybe, think twice before you hit the send key.

∞ Make Yourself look good Online

You will be judged by the quality of your writing. Spelling and grammar do count. Be pleasant and polite. Don't use offensive language, and don't be confrontational for the sake of it.

∞ Share Expert Knowledge

The Internet was founded and grew because scientists wanted to share information. Gradually, the rest of us got in on the act. *Don't be afraid to share what you know!*

∞ Help keep Flame wars Under Control

"Flaming" is what people do when they express a strongly held opinion without holding back any emotion. Netiquette *does* forbid the perpetuation of flame wars; a series of angry letters, most of them from two or three people directed toward each other, that can dominate the tone and destroy the camaraderie of a discussion group.

∞ Respect Other Peoples Privacy

Of course, you'd never dream of going through your colleagues' desk drawers. So naturally you wouldn't read their email either. Failing to respect other people's privacy is not just bad Netiquette. It could also cost you your job or get you into trouble.

☞ Don't Abuse Your Power

Knowing more than others, or having more power than they do, does not give you the right to take advantage of them! For example, systems administrators should never read the private email of others.

☞ Be Forgiving of other People's Mistakes

Everyone was a network newbie once. When someone makes a mistake, whether it's a spelling error or a spelling flame, a stupid question or an unnecessarily long answer, be kind about it. If it's a minor error, you may not need to say anything. If you do decide to inform someone of a mistake, point it out politely and preferably by private email rather than in public.

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette>