Online netiquette

The practices of courtesy and respect that apply to working with any group also apply online, and, as students cannot see each other, these practices may require even more attention over the Internet. Below are some guidelines to help. *Please note that by enrolling on this course you are agreeing to abide by these guidelines.*

1. Participate

In the online environment, it's not enough to turn up. If you don't join in no-one will know that you are there!

2. Share questions and tips

Questions you send to the discussion board will help others, and taking part in discussions will help you to learn. It is often the case that where a student encounters a problem, it is the experience of other students that is most valuable.

Students come to this course from a range of different backgrounds and cultures, so that there will be within a group a great deal of relevant, and complementary, experience. This means that all members have something to contribute.

3. Think before you click

Before you 'post' your comments, check through what you have written. Did you say exactly what you meant? How will the person on the other end read the words? While you can't anticipate all reactions, do read your messages carefully before you send them.

4. Remember that we can't see the grin on your face

When you make an ironic comment, we can't see the concern on your face if you only say a couple of words or write something which may seem harsh or critical, and we can't read your mind and fill in the gaps if you abbreviate your comments.

Help us "see" you by explaining your ideas fully. You could also use an emoticon, such as 😃, to let the reader know that your comment is meant to be ironic or funny.

5. Remember there is a person who will be reading your message.

Ask for feedback if you are not sure how your ideas and comments will be taken.

Because visual clues are often lacking in online communication, electronic messages can easily seem harsher than they are intended to be. If you disagree with what someone has said, please bear this in mind as you express that disagreement.

"Flaming", or flying off the handle and ranting at someone else is not acceptable and any such postings will be removed from the discussion areas. If you feel offended by someone please do not "flame" on the board, as this makes things unpleasant for the whole group. You can take the matter to your tutor, who will help you to resolve it.

Derogatory, offensive or inappropriate comments are unacceptable and any such postings will be removed.

6. Keep your messages short and to the topic

When composing your messages aim to express your thoughts concisely. Obviously you will want to explain your point, but if you write a very long message it has the same effect as someone 'holding forth' or 'rambling' in a face-to-face discussion. Practise your communication skills by 'listening' to others as well as expressing your ideas. In addition, reading lengthy messages on a computer screen may be tedious for you and your readers. Lengthy postings don't hold people's attention and are less likely to get a response.

7. Serious or persistent breaches of the netiquette

If your tutor considers that your postings are in breach of this netiquette, they will have them removed, and will warn you to moderate your behaviour. Persistent or serious breaches of the netiquette will be reported to the Deputy Director, who may determine that the offending student should be disbarred from the course for a limited period, or be expelled from the course. If you feel such action has been taken unjustly, you may make a complaint under the Department's complaints procedures. Particularly serious breaches or persistent breaches (that might for example be construed as harassment or unlawful discrimination) may result in disciplinary action.

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