

# Netiquette Guidance

Netiquette guidelines dictate what tasteful and respectful online behaviour is. These rules tend to change over time due to the changing nature of the online space. Here are a few ground netiquette rules for online classes that students should be aware of.

## 1. Be Careful with Your Tone

You should be careful with capitalization, as writing in ALL-CAPS can oftentimes be interpreted as YELLING! and can be viewed as impolite. Similarly, be mindful of not talking over someone, or shouting to get your point across.

## 2. Be Accurate and Factual

The internet is a vast place with information coming from all sorts of sources. Be careful when providing information. It's important to fact-check everything you read and possibly include sources when giving advice or information.

## 3. Search First, Then Ask

The same goes for questions regarding class structure. You may find your answers in the participant lesson plan or training microsite. Of course, if you fail to find your answer after some time spent searching, you should turn to your facilitator or peers for help.

## 4. Don't Use Sarcasm Freely

While in-person, we communicate with the help of facial expressions and gestures. Conveying the same message online can prove more challenging. This is especially true when it comes to sarcastic humour, as it usually isn't possible to transmit the tone of voice when using text.

A light-hearted joke can be viewed differently in text. You will need to be careful about making the intent behind your words as clear as possible, which is why sarcasm is off-limits most times.

## 5. Be as Polite as You Are in Person

Being polite on the internet should be as common as in real life. Unfortunately, that is not the case in many situations. A significant number of people tend to use the internet as a cover and their display as a shield, which leads to them writing what they would never say in public.

A key part of the netiquette is only typing what you would be comfortable with saying to someone's face. Hence being respectful and polite to others should be part of your communications online.

## 6. Use Proper Grammar and Punctuation

Many people tend to forget the rules that apply to writing when communicating online. However, resorting to proper grammar and punctuation can make the message seem more professional and thought out. It should be easy to read and comprehensible. That way, you will save precious time for someone reading your email, message, comment, or post.

## 7. Stay on Topic

When there is a discussion happening, it's crucial that everyone stays on topic. It's easy to stray off the initial conversation, especially when there are many people participating in it. Filling the conversation with unnecessary information can lose precious time and make it hard for someone to understand what the discussion is about.

## 8. Remember That Nothing Is Private Online

Online privacy is something you should keep in mind when typing anything. Most things you post, and share are probably going to be there for a long time. This means that you should stay away from anything considered inappropriate and rude.

## 9. Make Clear and Brief Points

Unlike face-to-face interactions, taking too long to get to a point can result in the message getting lost in text. Hence it best to use short and clear sentences when trying to explain something. It gets the point across more effectively and leaves less room for misunderstandings.

## 10. Respect People's Privacy

Treat others' privacy the same way you would want some to handle your private information. You shouldn't give the personal information of your classmates and facilitators online to anyone. This means being careful with passwords, whereabouts, private conversations, and pictures.

## 11. Use Your Facilitators' Proper Titles

Although using the proper title for your facilitator should be understood, many people tend to forget it once classes are online. As a result, a certain amount of formality is a vital part of netiquette guidelines. Unless the facilitator states otherwise, you should always refer to them professionally.

## 12. Respect Others' Opinions

You should be aware that you're not always going to agree with the opinions of your classmates or facilitators. However, keep in mind that you should always be respectful in discussions. You can disagree with someone and respect their opinions at the same time.

### **13. Don't Overuse the Chat Box**

Many online classes come with chat boxes to help students communicate. They serve as a way of letting students communicate with each other and ask questions related to what they are learning. You should know to only use the chat box when your text is going to be relevant to the topic you're discussing in class. It's not advisable to use it as a tool for chatting with fellow students about irrelevant matters.

### **14. Submit Assignments Carefully**

Being mindful of how to submit online assignments to facilitators should be something every student knows how to do. Since there is no face-to-face interaction, remember to put your name or group number on it along with the subject line.