

7 ESSENTIAL RULES OF NETIQUETTE

Online Communication

When you use e-mail, instant messenger, video calls, or discussion boards to communicate with others online, please be sure to follow the rules of professional online communications known as [netiquette](#). These rules will help you communicate with instructors, classmates, and potential employers more effectively and will help prevent misunderstandings.



- 1) **REMEMBER THE GOLDEN RULE** – Even though you may be interacting with a computer screen, you are communicating with a real person who will react to your message. Make a good impression - treat others with the same respect that you would like to receive and avoid confrontational or offensive language.
 - ✓ To help convey meaning when creating messages, it is *sometimes* acceptable to include appropriate [emoticon symbols](#), such as a smiley face :) However, for professional communications these would be inappropriate.
- 2) **AVOID SLANG, ACRONYMS, AND TEXT TALK** – Communicating effectively in college and business environments requires the use of correct terminology, spelling, and grammar that can easily be understood. For example, use “your” instead of “ur”.
- 3) **AVOID “SCREAMING” IN TYPED MESSAGES** – Typing an *entire* message using all capital letters is known as “screaming”. It is distracting and generally frowned upon in professional environments. It is better to draw emphasis to selected words or phrases by: using italic or bold text; using a different color for text or background color; or denoting emphasis using special characters (Example: ****Important****).
- 4) **PROOFREAD YOUR MESSAGES BEFORE SENDING THEM** – Proofreading your messages before you send them is a best practice for effective and efficient communication. Strive to make your communications concise and free of any:
 - ✓ Spelling and grammar errors
 - ✓ Confusing terms or phrases that could be misunderstood
 - ✓ Errors of omission, such as missing content or recipients
 - ✓ Errors in accuracy of information

- 5) **USE MATC COMMUNICATION TOOLS ONLY FOR ACADEMIC RELATED MATTERS** – When using Blackboard or your MATC administered Google Apps, remember they were given to you for *academic related* communications. It is safe to assume that all communications occurring under these accounts are owned and archived by MATC and could potentially be reviewed by system administrators. For personal communications with friends, family, or non-MATC affiliated parties, it is best to use your own personal account.
- 6) **EXERCISE GOOD JUDGMENT WHEN SHARING INFORMATION WITH OTHERS ONLINE** – E-mail and chat messages that you send or receive are considered private and should not be forwarded or copied to others without gaining the consent of all involved participants. In general, messages posted to discussion boards and social media sites can be read by the public. You may never know who might read or share what you post. It is a good practice to always ask a post’s author for permission before sharing a post with other parties.
- ✓ To protect your privacy and safety, do not share online any sensitive personal information such as:
 - Your home address or phone number
 - Personal conversations
 - Social plans, such as vacations
 - Financial information
 - Usernames, passwords, or hints
 - Anything personal that you would not want shared by others over the Internet
 - ✓ If the material you share with others online came from another source, make every effort to gain permission from the original author or copyright holder. Copying someone else's work and passing it off as your own is **plagiarism**. It damages your reputation and could subject you to serious academic and legal consequences.
- 7) **RESPECT DIVERSITY IN VIEWPOINTS** - Be constructive and respectful when sharing opinions, beliefs, and criticisms, or responding to those of others in the conversation.
- ✓ When sharing a viewpoint that differs from someone else’s, it is a best practice to first acknowledge the other person by briefly restating what he or she said, but in your own words. This lets the person know that you are listening and trying to understand them.
 - ✓ When presenting an opinion or criticism, it is helpful to use phrases that identify to whose point of view you are referring. If the opinion is yours, you can begin with the phrase “In my experience” or “In my opinion”. If it is a viewpoint of someone else, make sure you identify that in your message (Example: “According to Eric Ericson,” or “The president believes”).