

# Netiquette

A combination of the words "network" and "etiquette," used to describe the informal code of Internet conduct.

- **Avoid hurting someone's feelings with e-mail.**  
Sometimes, online, people can't tell that you are joking. When you write an e-mail message, make sure the person you're sending it to will know whether you are happy, sad, angry, joking, etc. You can do this by using smileys, such as :).
- **Respect other people's online rights.**  
People on the Internet have rights just as they do in everyday life. If someone sends you a threatening letter, or makes crank phone calls to your house, it can be annoying and sometimes very scary. The same is true on the Internet. If someone sends you e-mail which threatens you or makes you feel uncomfortable, talk to a parent or other adult right away.
- **Avoid insulting someone unless you want to start a flame war.**  
A flame war is when angry people try to punish each other with e-mail. Sometimes this can be done by sending so many messages that a mailbox gets jammed, and sometimes this is done by sending a few very nasty messages meant to hurt someone's feelings. If you insult someone with e-mail, they will probably get angry just as they would if you insulted them face to face.
- **If someone insults you, be calm.**  
Starting a flame war is serious business on the Net. Even if you are angry with someone, you don't need to take things any further. Try being calm, ignoring the message, or sending a polite message asking for them to explain what they meant. It may have been a misunderstanding.
- **Avoid "crashing" discussion groups or forums.**  
People on the Net frequently get together online to talk about things they may have in common. This can be done on a listserv, a bulletin board, a chat group, etc. If you join the discussion just for the fun of "crashing" it, or ruining it, people will definitely get angry.
- **Respect the privacy of other people.**  
If someone tells you something secret, it should be kept secret. This includes passwords, full names, addresses, or interests. Sharing your own password with someone else, even someone you like, is never a good idea. Passwords and personal information are private, and are never safe to share with others.
- **Be responsible online.**  
When you are at the computer, you are in control. Avoid using the computer to harm other people. Taking things which are not yours (such as files, passwords, or credit card numbers), spreading rumors about other people online, and infecting other computers with viruses (on purpose) are examples of harming other people online.
- **Help other people learn more about the Net.**  
Chances are someone else taught you a lot of what you know about the Internet. The Net is growing quickly, and it's difficult to keep up. Other kids, or even your parents and teachers, may need help understanding what it's all about. Try to help them if you can. Who knows? They might show you a thing or two someday!

*\*\*Please Note: Netiquette for Kids Page Courtesy of the Boston Public Library*