

# Netiquette: Rules of Behavior on the Internet

(Source: <http://www.education.com/reference/article/netiquette-rules-behavior-internet/>)

The etiquette guidelines that govern behavior when communicating on the Internet have become known as netiquette. Netiquette covers not only rules of behavior during discussions but also guidelines that reflect the unique electronic nature of the medium. Netiquette usually is enforced by fellow users who are quick to point out infractions of netiquette rules. The summary of email rules in the information below is based on published sources such as Shea's (2004) online book, *Netiquette*.

- **Identify yourself:**
  - Begin messages with a salutation and end them with your name.
  - Use a signature (a footer with your identifying information) at the end of a message
- **Include a subject line.** Give a descriptive phrase in the subject line of the message header that tells the topic of the message (not just "Hi, there!").
- **Avoid sarcasm.** People who don't know you may misinterpret its meaning.
- **Respect others' privacy.** Do not quote or forward personal email without the original author's permission.
- **Acknowledge and return messages promptly.**
- **Copy with caution.** Don't copy everyone you know on each message.
- **No spam (a.k.a. junk mail).** Don't contribute to worthless information on the Internet by sending or responding to mass postings of chain letters, rumors, etc.
- **Be concise.** Keep messages concise—about one screen, as a rule of thumb.
- **Use appropriate language:**
  - Avoid coarse, rough, or rude language.
  - Observe good grammar and spelling.
- **Use appropriate emoticons (emotion icons) to help convey meaning.** Use "smiley's" or punctuation such as :-) to convey emotions. See website list of emoticons at <http://netlingo.com/smiley.cfm> and <http://www.robelle.com/smugbook/smiley.html>.
- **Use appropriate intensifiers to help convey meaning.**
  - Avoid "flaming" (online "screaming") or sentences typed in all caps.
  - Use asterisks surrounding words to indicate italics used for emphasis (\*at last\*).
  - Use words in brackets, such as (grin), to show a state of mind.
  - Use common acronyms (e.g., LOL for "laugh out loud").