

CMU Online Rules of Netiquette

“Netiquette” refers to the etiquette by which you should abide when using online services for your classes and campus communications. This includes email, social media, online chat, blogs, online discussions or message boards, instant messages, etc. Although you are participating in course activities and using course materials online, the [CMU Student Code of Conduct](#) still applies. Online participants are expected to behave in a respectful manner that is supportive to other learners, participants, and faculty.

Online behavior should foster an environment that is productive and thoughtful. Netiquette provides guidelines for facilitating this positive atmosphere. Some basic principles of netiquette include:

- **Be respectful.** Remember that you are communicating with actual people. Be courteous and show respect, even if you have differences of opinion. Remember to treat others as you’d like to be treated. Good manners apply online as well as in the traditional classroom.
- **Think before you post.** Follow posting directions and examples. Be aware of who may be able to view your posting, and how your post may be interpreted. Try to maintain a fair and objective tone.
- **Stay on topic.** Make sure your communication is related to the subject and does not wander off-topic. Ask questions that are appropriate and relevant to the topic. Keep academic discussions free of “chit-chat”.
- **Write clearly.** Even though the online environment may seem more informal than your face-to-face class, you are still in an academic course and mature communication is expected. Correct spelling and grammar are required. Proper sentence structure and punctuation should be used. Avoid abbreviations and “text speak.”

- **Use appropriate language and style.** Profanity or offensive wording is not acceptable. ALL CAPS and repeated punctuation (???? or !!!!) is considered rude and should be avoided. While it is okay to have robust discussions and differences of opinion, avoid inflammatory wording 'flaming' that might start arguments. To disagree, use language that encourages intelligent discourse and discussion. Ignore statements by others that appear inflammatory.
- **Be considerate of others.** Do not make derogatory, condescending, or harassing remarks. Communication should be well-intentioned and well-articulated. It should foster a positive learning environment. Be aware of how sarcasm may be misinterpreted by your readers. Bullying, threatening, or abusive language will not be tolerated.
- **Allow for misunderstandings.** Keep in mind that writing can often convey the incorrect tone or intention. Make allowances for unintended rudeness or misunderstanding.
- **Cite your sources.** If you post work that is not your own or contains work that is not your own, be sure to reference your sources.
- **When in doubt, do not send or post.**