Core Rules of Netiquette

In the realm of online higher education, netiquette, or internet etiquette, serves as the cornerstone of respectful and effective communication. As we navigate virtual classrooms and digital learning environments, adhering to the principles of netiquette becomes essential for fostering a positive and conducive atmosphere for learning. Netiquette guides our interactions, emphasizing the importance of empathy, respect, and professionalism in all online exchanges. By embracing these principles, we create an environment where students and educators can engage meaningfully, collaborate productively, and succeed academically. This document outlines Virginia Shea's key rules of netiquette (see Netiquette from Albion.com) tailored to the context of online higher education, highlighting the importance of responsible online behavior for building a thriving virtual community.

REMEMBER THE HUMAN

In the digital realm, it's easy to forget that behind every screen is a real person with feelings, thoughts, and experiences. "Remember the Human" reminds us to treat others with empathy and respect in all our online interactions. Whether we're posting in a discussion forum, sending an email, or chatting in a virtual classroom, recognizing the human element helps us foster a sense of connection and understanding.

ADHERE TO THE SAME STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Just as we follow certain standards of behavior in face-to-face interactions, we should apply the same principles online. This rule reminds us to practice courtesy, professionalism, and respect in all our online communications. Whether it's avoiding offensive language, being mindful of tone, or respecting others' boundaries, adhering to real-life standards helps create a positive online environment.

KNOW WHERE YOU ARE IN CYBERSPACE

The internet is vast and diverse, encompassing various platforms, communities, and cultures. "Know Where You Are in Cyberspace" advises us to be mindful of the context of our online interactions. Different platforms may have different norms and expectations, so understanding the environment we're in helps us navigate it more effectively and avoid misunderstandings.

RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE'S TIME AND BANDWIDTH

In online communication, respecting others' time and bandwidth is essential for maintaining a smooth and efficient exchange of information. Avoiding spam, unnecessary messages, and large file attachments ensures that everyone can participate in discussions and access resources without undue interruption or delay.

MAKE YOURSELF LOOK GOOD ONLINE

Your online presence reflects not only on you but also on your institution and peers. "Make Yourself Look Good Online" encourages us to present ourselves professionally and positively in all our digital interactions. This includes using proper grammar and spelling, maintaining a respectful tone, and showcasing our expertise and knowledge.

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SHARE EXPERT KNOWLEDGE
Online learning thrives on collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and ideas. This rule encourages us to contribute our expertise and insights to the online community, enriching discussions and enhancing learning outcomes for everyone involved. By sharing our knowledge generously, we help create a supportive and intellectually stimulating environment for learning.

KEEP FLAME WARS UNDER CONTROL
In the digital realm, disagreements can escalate quickly into heated arguments known as "flame wars." This rule advises us to keep such conflicts in check by avoiding personal attacks, inflammatory language, and hostile behavior. Constructive criticism and respectful dialogue are essential for resolving conflicts and maintaining a positive online environment.

RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE'S PRIVACY
Privacy is a fundamental right, even in the digital age. "Respect Other People's Privacy" reminds us to safeguard personal information and respect the privacy of others online. This includes refraining from sharing sensitive information without consent and being mindful of confidentiality when engaging in discussions or collaborative projects.

DON'T ABUSE YOUR POWER
In any online community, certain individuals may hold positions of authority or influence. "Don't Abuse Your Power" cautions against using one's position for personal gain, intimidation, or manipulation. Responsible leadership and ethical conduct are essential for maintaining trust and fostering a healthy online community.

BE FORGIVING OF OTHER PEOPLE'S MISTAKES
In the fast-paced and sometimes chaotic world of online communication, mistakes are inevitable. "Be Forgiving of Other People's Mistakes" encourages us to approach others with understanding and compassion, recognizing that everyone is learning and growing. By practicing forgiveness and empathy, we cultivate a culture of support and encouragement in our online interactions.

By adhering to these netiquette guidelines, you contribute to a positive and inclusive online learning community where everyone can thrive and succeed. Thank you for your commitment to respectful and responsible online communication!

Adapted from: Shea, Virginia (Virginia G.). Netiquette. Ed. 1.0., Albion Books, 1994.