

## ONLINE ETIQUETTE OR 'NETIQUETTE'

### What is netiquette?

*Netiquette* is a term derived from the words 'Internet Etiquette' or 'Network Etiquette' and refers to acceptable online manners and behaviour. Internet codes of conduct cover all online activity, from email to blogs, social network sites to discussion boards and even text messages.

### Why is netiquette important?

It is important because polite, respectful behaviour is critical no matter how we choose to communicate with others. Here are some other reasons:

- User protocols have developed for language and signs in chat rooms and discussion boards, but not everyone has the same level of computer literacy.
  - The more we use this type of communication as part of the university experience the greater the likelihood that conflict or misunderstandings will occur, either between students or between students and staff.
- It is more difficult to determine another person's meaning or intention when we cannot see or hear them.
- Social network sites, blogs, discussion boards and emails can provide a permanent record of your comments, which can be used as part of a complaint process.
  - Comments you make online or in emails, or images you post, may be accessible for decades, even when you think they are private.

### Some netiquette quick tips...

- Others may not know what written shortcuts such as 'lol' or 'rofl' mean. Avoid confusion by not using shortcuts in online communications.
- Only use positive and courteous emoticons.
  - The smiley face ☺ is available in most USQ online applications including ePortfolio. Wimba classrooms also have a symbol for applause.
- Type in lower case: in online language, capitals mean SHOUTING, and will be viewed as anger rather than emphasis.
- Be careful not to use stereotypes or make generalisations about any social or minority groups. If you can't see people you don't know if members of these groups are among your classmates.
- Avoid slang and humorous or self-deprecating irony: your comments might be misinterpreted by people who cannot see or hear you, and do not know your sense of humour.

### Other resources and links

- '[Netiquette](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette)' (Wikipedia) <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette>>
- '[The Basic Rule of Netiquette](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcXJUV3vat0)' (YouTube video) <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcXJUV3vat0>>
- '[Net Etiquette guidelines](http://snipurl.com/11hp8e)' (Flinders University) <<http://snipurl.com/11hp8e>>