# Digital Etiquette

A thorough guide by Dakoda Koziol

# The art of digital etiquette

At this point, digital communication is what's spinning the social world. Ideas, thoughts, and messages can be sent anywhere, everywhere, and instantly. But as a wise person, Spiderman, once said: "With great power comes great responsibility".

Luckily, a lot of the skills required for good digital communication carry over from written and verbal communication, and almost all of it boils down to common sense.

# A few tips that apply everywhere

○ Be courteous. remember, you're talking to another human being.

  ○ If you're on a public forum, settle issues privately via instant messaging or email.

  ○ Report/flag inappropriate content.

○ Use your manners: "Please", "Thank you", "Hello".

○ Respond in a timely manner.

○ Don't feed the trolls! Some people simply *want* to argue. Just walk away (figuratively).

# A few *more* tips that apply everywhere

○ Check before you send! Read through twice. Read it aloud if it's really important.

○ Be careful with your personal information! What gets online, stays online.

○ Remember what setting you're in. Slang and texting acronyms may be appropriate for some of your personal discussions (still not recommended), but don't use them in professional or educational settings.

○ Be respectful of your in-person conversations. Put the phone away and engage.

○ Important personal communications should be handled in person, if possible.

# Email

It's the original mainstream digital communication. Email, like paper mail, is a page of text with optional attachments sent to between one and several recipients.

However, email is instant, and accessible from anywhere, making it the go-to form of communication in professional settings.

# How to write a good email

For business or education

- Always write a subject line that clearly informs the recipient of the subject of the email. Do not leave it blank.

- Be concise and to the point. Wordy emails tend to get skimmed over.

- Use a signature (name and contact information). Most email clients can be set up to do this automatically.

For personal

- Again, always write a subject line.

# Text messaging

It's the preferred method for quick, short messages. The general digital communication rules outlined earlier cover texting etiquette well enough. The trick is knowing *when* to text. Sometimes texting can be an unnecessary bottleneck, wasting everyone's time. Get ready to learn when and when not to text!

# Knowing when to text

- Texting is great for questions with binary or short answers. Ex. "Where are you?", "Are you ready?"

- Texting is useful for quick, short directions. Ex. "Meet me at the office in 30 minutes"

- If a matter is urgent, skip texting and make a phone call.

- Long messages shouldn't be texted. Send an email.

- Longer conversations are more efficient spoken over the phone.

- Texting is best done one-to-one or in small groups, especially when a reply is expected. Email, social media, or a forum may be a better solution depending on group size and the amount of discussion expected.

# Social Media

Those of us in the 21$^{st}$ century know just how powerful a tool social media can be. Every post you make is immediately visible to the world. For your reputation's sake, getting that post right is vital.

Sure, technically a post can be deleted, but probably not before it's accumulated a few views. Once something is put on social media, it can never be completely removed.

No pressure.

# No worries!

With a little social etiquette advice and some common sense and courtesy, you'll be the savviest user on the internet.

# Social Media Mastery

- Business
    - **Post regularly.** Be active. No one will follow an empty account.
    - **Promote.** Get people to like, comment, share, and follow. Direct people to your social media from your businesses website or anywhere else you can.
    - **Engage** with your followers. Being active in comment sections helps with social accessibility. Especially reply when a question is customer service related.
    - **Bank on trends** with hashtags. This can introduce your business to loads of new people. Plus, typically, trendy = cool.
- Personal use
    - Just be nice and have fun! You're not a business, you don't need publicity. Just get social, digitally!

# Online forums

Online forums are the best! The answers to 90% (guestimate) of the questions you might have can be found by searching through the right forum, and you can jump in and ask for the answers to the rest. You can get criticism and advice on a project you're working on, and critique and advise others. Or you can just chat. Forums are for learning and growing by finding answers and helping others do the same, for work, school, personal things, or anything.

The catch is you have to be careful about your posts. A lot of information can accumulate on these forums, so to keep things tidy, spam and redundancy has to be removed. Respect the forum and use your good forum etiquette in the first place.

# Steps before you post…

**1**

**Look it up** in a search engine. Make sure the answer to your question isn't already out there.

**2**

**Read the forum rules.** These will likely be similar to what is outlined on the next slide.

**3**

**Search the forum** you're posting on specifically. Google doesn't always catch everything.

# How to post on a forum

- Obey forum rules.
- Use a clear and descriptive title to help others find your post.
- If you're trying to solve a problem, be as descriptive as possible. "It doesn't work" won't cut it.
  - Include visual aids if it would be useful (screenshots, photos, drawings, etc.).
- At the same time, be as concise as possible.
  - If an issue is part of a larger project, upload/discuss only what's relevant to that particular issue.
  - Don't quote a persons entire post if it's more than a few lines.
- Only reply to a post if you have something to add to the discussion.
- Respect the moderators. They just want to keep the forum running smoothly.
- And…usually a lot more. I repeat, obey the forum rules!

# Emoji – Unprofessional?

A few years ago, emoji weren't acceptable at all in the workplace. They were for casual, personal use only.

But, the times are changing. More and more people who grew up using emoji are now part of the workplace, and they aren't as unacceptable as they once were. Plus, emoji can be genuinely useful tools to set the tone of a message. Still, a poorly placed emoji can also make you look bad in front of an employer, client, teacher, or anyone really. Just be careful!

## Emoji Acceptability Checklist

❑ If I'm communicating with my superior/client, has she/he used an emoji first, establishing them as acceptable?

❑ Am I sure this emoji is conveying what I intend it to? Is it completely appropriate?

❑ Are the emoji used sparingly?

If you can't check all the above, consider changing or removing emoji.

If you're still not sure, Lifehacker put it nicely: "When it doubt, leave it out".

# There it is – you're a pro now!

You see? Digital communication *is* common sense! Be nice, don't waste other peoples time, be clear, and to wrap this up in a couple words – be considerate. That's really all you need!

Still, it's good to be aware of these rules and tips, just to make sure that you're making the most of the awesome tools of digital communication.

# Works Cited

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