Best Practices for Online Communication

Be respectful. Online, it can be easy to forget that the words on the screen represent a real person. Try to communicate as if you were interacting face-to-face.

Read and listen first. Whether you're responding to an email or adding to a comment thread, take the time to examine the communication that has come before you. Be open to new perspectives.

Keep your audience in mind. Communication that may work well in an informal, social setting like your Instagram may be out of place in a more formal or professional context like an email to your boss. Think about your audience when choosing your language, especially before using slang terms, abbreviations, or profanity.

Be aware of privacy. Think about whether you want to communicate publicly or privately. Choose tools and settings accordingly.

Prepare for permanence. The things you say online can be screenshotted, forwarded, and shared in ways that your in-person communication cannot.

Take time to proofread. Reread before you post, comment, or email, especially if your content is emotionally driven.

Boost your credibility. Critically evaluate information before you share it and always credit your sources when making a claim.

Be aware of your power. Some people have more power than others in digital spaces. Consider the power you have and use it to amplify underrepresented voices and act against bullying and harassment.

Best practices adapted from:

Shea, V. (1994). The Core Rules of Netiquette. Retrieved from
http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

University of North Carolina at Wilmington and Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. (n.d.). Netiquette Guidelines. *University of North Carolina at Wilmington*. Retrieved from
http://uncw.edu/oel/documents/pdfs/netiquette.pdf

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