

THAKUR COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & COMMERCE
[AUTONOMOUS]
COMMUNICATION SKILLS

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED COMMUNICATION

- Man has always strived to achieve better means and ways of communicating with others. The telegraph and the telephone marked the beginning of what became the age of information technology.
- The last century has seen a revolution in communication technology, especially due to electronics and electronic media.
- Computers, E-mail, Internet and Fax machines are not only used in business houses, they are equally popular with individuals for their personal use.
- This information technology revolution has changed the way we do business, the way we work, play and live.
- There is a dramatic increase in the amount of information available to us, as also an increase in the speed and ease of receiving and sending the information.
- One's physical location is now not as important as before in doing business; one can do it from one's home.
- Computer literacy is now a basic requirement in almost all fields, and business organizations need to change their structures and systems to incorporate these new methods.

The major media and modes to be considered are: –

❖ **TELEPHONE**

- Telephone is a device that transmits speech at a distance through the medium of electro-magnetic waves.
- The first telephone was invented in 1876 by Alexander Graham Bell. Today's telephone is a very sophisticated instrument with different applications and services. We also have different types of telephones.

❖ **Landline or Standard Telephones:**

- These phones operate through a network of cables controlled by telephone exchanges.
- Variations of this phone are the cordless 'phone which allows more mobility to the speaker within a limited space, and answering machines, which record messages and the names and phone numbers of callers when the receiver is not able to take the call.

❖ **Cellular or Mobile Phones:**

- These are wireless devices that use radio waves to transmit sounds.
- The cellular system divides a particular geographical area into sections called cells; the purpose is that maximum number of people can make maximum use of a limited number of radio frequencies.
- The cellular system allocates a set number of frequencies for each call. Thus, two cells can use the same frequencies for different conversations.

▶ **Modem telephones provide different kinds of services:**

✓ **Networking:** A telephone network is a connection of two or more stations that wish to communicate. Networking is a service which allows us to establish contact with more than one user at a time. The telephone network also becomes a base for computer networks and Fax transmissions.

✓ **Teleconferencing and Videoconferencing:** These are the modern – day alternatives to traditional face-to-face meetings. Sounds and video are transmitted via phone lines or satellites, so that people in different places and different countries can communicate with one another at the same time.

Videoconferencing involves both viewing and speaking and teleconferencing only involves speaking – however, both terms are used

interchangeably. Video-conferencing and Teleconferencing are a form of electronically enabled group communication.

TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

- ✓ The only tool of communication in a telephonic conversation is our voice.
- ✓ It is therefore important to create a good impression on the listener by using our voice correctly.
- ✓ We must speak clearly, politely and pleasantly, with a smile in our voice.
- ✓ Our speech must be precise. We must also listen carefully and politely to the other person.
- ✓ Before making a call, we must mentally prepare the message we want to convey.
- ✓ When we answer a call, we must first announce ourselves – our company's name, department and so on, then greet the caller with a 'Good Morning' or 'Good day'.
- ✓ To sum up, our voice must make a good impact on the listener.

ADVANTAGES OF THE TELEPHONE

- ✓ It saves time.
- ✓ We can communicate without leaving our seat.
- ✓ It provides immediate feedback.
- ✓ It provides immediate proof to the caller that his message has been received.
- ✓ It provides a large range of services to its subscribers – such as STD and ISD (Subscriber Trunk Dialing and International Subscriber Dialing respectively); call-waiting and call-forwarding, morning alarm etc.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE TELEPHONE

- ✓ It may not always save time, e.g. When there are wrong numbers or mechanical disturbances.

- ✓ It does not have legal validity – a telephonic talk cannot be used as legal proof.
- ✓ Facial expressions and gestures cannot be communicated over the telephone.
- ✓ A telephone call can be made at a wrong or inconvenient time for the receiver.

❖ **FAX**

- Fax is the popular name given to the facsimile machine. (Facsimile means copy). It is like a copying machine linked to a telephone.
- It is used to transmit written material, visual material like photographs, charts, drawings, and diagrams, artwork, documents and certificates.
- A facsimile machine scans a printed page, converts it into a signal and transmits this signal over a telephone line to the receiving Fax machine. The receiving machine reproduces an exact copy of the original document on its in-built printer.
- Thus, the fax acts like a long-distance Xerox machine.
- The received copy contains the date, time and the sender `s fax number. The sender also receives a printout confirming the date, time, and receiver `s number.
- The latest digital fax machines allow communication through computers and are much faster.
- Fax machines can transmit documents across the world through satellite networks.
- The Fax machine is the fastest method of transmitting documents and technical data. Its main drawbacks are its cost and, at times, the quality of print on the fax paper.

❖ **COMPUTERS**

- A computer is an electronic device used to gather, organize, modify and generate information.
- It processes the information given to it and gives the desired results.
- Computers perform several functions.

- They can enter data; calculate; store data for later use; retrieve the stored data; compare data and display data in the desired format.
- A computer comprises Hardware and Software.
- Hardware is the general name for all the equipment including both the computer and its parts, such as the printer, keyboard, monitor and disk – drives.
- Software is the name used to describe all the programs which can be used on the computer.
- A program is a set of instructions written in the language of the computer.

❑ **A Computer consists of certain essential devices.**

- ✓ The input devices, which include the electronic keyboard and the compact disks (CDs) and microfloppy disks. Input devices feed data into the computer.
- ✓ The output devices, through which processed information can be received and seen. These are the monitor screen and the printer.
- ✓ The processing device, which is called the central processing unit (CPU), is the brain of the computer. It performs the main functions of the computer.
- ✓ The storage devices, which consist of the hard disk, which forms the main storage, and the floppy disks , compact discs and pen drives which store less information than the hard disk.

❑ **COMPUTERS NETWORKS**

Computers connect with one another through a telephone network. But the job of **transmitting the digital information** of the computer over a telephone network is done by a device called a **Modem**. Thus, a modem is a device which helps computers to connect with each other. Computer connections are called **Networks**. There are several kinds of networks, large and small, such as:

- **LAN (Local Area Network)**, as the name suggests, connects a number of computers spread over a relatively small area. LAN is used

in companies to connect several offices within one building, or to connect several buildings in one complex, LAN is typically used in colleges, libraries etc.

- **WAN (Wide Area Network)** are networks that cover entire states, and countries.
- **THE INTERNET** is the largest network of computers in the world, connecting individuals and groups to information and to services all over the world. The computers are connected through servers; a server being a central computer that contains shared information.

Uses of the Internet

- ✓ The Internet helps us to access information on almost any subject from anywhere in the world. It gives us factual information, enables us to research topics, do distance learning, network with friends and business associates, and conduct business.
- ✓ The net can put us on an 'Information Superhighway', where we can study for a degree or diploma, advertise goods and services, conduct meetings online, watch films, read books, shop, and get the latest news.
- ✓ It also has other important uses, such as E-Commerce, Videoconferencing and E-mail.
- ✓ E-commerce or E-Business may be described as using electronic methods and means to conduct business activities.
- ✓ The Internet has made E-Commerce possible where the web-sites of the Net can be used to make enquiries, place orders, market and advertise goods and services, in short, to buy and sell.
- ✓ The Net has thus created a new international community which is electronically connected.

❑ WORLD WIDE WEB

It is a part of the Internet. It provides a great deal of varied information. From the World Wide Web the user can get information

from different locations or web-sites. The Internet also makes communication within an organization and outside the organization more efficient and easier, using either the intranet or the extranet.

Intranet is a private internal network within an organization, meant only for its own employees. It uses the same technology as the Internet, but the information provided is accessed only by the people in the organization. Outsiders using the Internet cannot access the intranets.

Extranet is just an external intranet, which allows certain authorized people from outside the organization to enter the network by using a password. Such people include suppliers, customers, financiers etc. Intranet and extranet make internal and external communication easier and save time, effort and money. In conclusion one can say that the sender has a variety of options to choose from when he wishes to communicate. He has to evaluate his needs and select the best method or mode of communication.

❑ **VIDEOCONFERENCING**

It is done through the Internet. It is a mode of communication where people use their computers and web cameras (webcams) and conduct meetings where they can speak with one another and see one another. Videoconferences enable face-to-face communication between people who are far away from each other.

It can be used to make presentations, for on-line teaching, and to enable colleagues to work on a shared project. It can also be used to communicate with family and friends.

❑ **E-MAIL**

- ✓ It is one of the most significant uses of the Internet. E-mail or electronic mail is available free of cost to all Internet users. It has an address and the format of a letter, although the address is more compact. An E-mail

address is a combination of the sender's or receiver's name and the site address. E.g., vardharai@yahoo.com.

- ✓ E-mail is the fastest way of transmitting messages with quick feedback. Messages can be filed, deleted or trashed.
- ✓ Text messages can be accompanied by photos, graphics, and sounds, E.g., sending animated greeting cards with sound and graphics.
- ✓ E-mail messages may also contain emoticons. An emoticon is a representation of an emotion using keyboard characters. E.g., A smiley face
- ✓ E-mail also uses abbreviations and acronyms to convey messages. E.g., BTW means by the way; TIA means thanks in advance and so on.
- ✓ E-mail has become extremely popular as a mode of communication due to its many advantages. Internet Messenger (IM) enables members to chat with one another, discuss important matters, send photographs, and transfer files.

❑ **NETIQUETTE**

Netiquette is a word for Internet Etiquette. It comes from 'Network' and 'Etiquette'. Netiquette sets the rules for maintaining a positive social environment online. These apply to individuals using the internet for personal reasons, for students who are nowadays taking online classes, and for companies conducting business on the web.

Netiquette is often referred to as etiquette for the internet. These are not legally binding rules, but recommended rules of etiquette. Netiquette is mostly used for dealing with unknown people on the internet. The rules of netiquette vary depending on the platform and its participants. Generally, it is up to the operator of a website or communication app to specify the type and scope of netiquette. It is also their responsibility to monitor compliance with these basic rules and to penalize violations of them.

Adhering to these rules will prevent your online and offline relationships from being damaged. Learning these rules of Online Etiquette is equally important for students.

1. Be Careful About What You Type

One of the core rules of netiquettes is thinking before typing. This includes getting people's names right, not making negative remarks just because we can't see the person reading them, and using correct emojis. Refrain from becoming too casual online. Depending on your audience, you should be mindful of your tone. So, before writing or using emojis, think twice. Moreover, proofread your emails and online content to avoid spelling and grammatical errors. This is probably the most important netiquette rule for students.

2. Conduct Yourself as You Would in The Real World

Never ignore the other person's messages or close the chat abruptly when chatting online. It is one of the golden rules of netiquette. Now that most of us are working from home, following the core rules of netiquette is more crucial than ever. Prepare for your online discussions and look presentable. Working online means you aren't being judged on your physical appearance, but that is not an excuse to look shabby in meetings. This is one of the most vital of the ten rules of netiquette.

3. Respect Others' Privacy

Another important netiquette rule for online etiquette is valuing other people's privacy. Receiving confidential information comes with responsibility. It can be very tempting and easy to forward an email or image, but you must never compromise your colleague's or company's privacy. Without permission, never make the confidential information public in cyberspace. And only share information with people it concerns. This is a very important netiquette rule for students.

4. Avoid Plagiarism

One of the biggest perils of being in cyberspace is copyright infringement. This is a netiquette rule for students, professionals and all persons using the internet. Do not use another person's words, images or information without permission and citing the source. Copy-pasting comes easy while working online, especially when you have access to so much information. Go one step further and credit the source.

5. Research

Whether you're teaching online or conducting workplace meetings, make sure you have proof of the facts you share. The internet is full of misleading information, and it is your responsibility to check whether what you're sharing is factually correct. Sharing the sources of information is a good practice in this regard. In most cases, your audience will take your word, so you might be guilty of spreading wrong information. And if someone finds out your facts were wrong, you'll lose face and credibility. So, this is another one of the ten rules of online etiquette.

6. Think Twice Before Posting Pictures

One of the basic rules of netiquettes says that you should avoid publishing or sharing unprofessional pictures with co-workers or your classmates. The same rule applies to those with access to the social media platforms of the company. Posting unprofessional or inappropriate pictures may show the company in a bad light.

7. Always Use Your Professional Email Address for Official Communication

If you are working from home, send work emails using your official email address. If you do not have an official email, use a personal email that sounds professional. You won't be taken seriously if your email has credentials like 'cutegirl', 'handsomehunk', or 'beer lover'. It leaves a bad impression of you before the email recipient. This is an important netiquette

rule for professionals and also a netiquette rule for students looking for jobs and internships.

8. Use the Signature Block

Never forget to add a signature block at the end of official communication. The signature block must have details like the name of the company, contact details, designation, and department. If you are not using these netiquette rules, it could become a major source of conflict and miscommunication in online conversations.

9. Use Humour When Appropriate

Humour, which depends a lot on facial expressions, often gets lost in official conversations. But you can use some wit and not come off as insulting. Use humor once you're slightly familiar with your recipient and know they'd appreciate it. However, if you aren't sure about this, it is best to maintain a professional and formal tone. This is a golden rule of netiquette.

10. Always Report Offensive Content & Illegal Activities

The cyberworld is fraught with offensive speech, bullying, harassment, and theft. You might even come across illegal activities or practices such as piracy. Report such behavior immediately, whether it happens to you or someone else. If it is associated with the workplace, inform HR. This is a very crucial netiquette rule for students to follow.

11. Remember the Human

When communicating electronically, whether through email, instant message, discussion post, text, or some other method, practice the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Remember, your written words are read by real people, all deserving of respectful communication. Before you press "send" or "submit," ask yourself, "Would I be okay with this if someone else had written it?"

12. Know where you are in Cyberspace

"Netiquette varies from domain to domain." (Shea, 1994) Depending on where you are in the virtual world, the same written communication can be acceptable in one area, while it might be considered inappropriate in another. What you text to a friend may not be appropriate in an email to a classmate or colleague. Can you think of another example?

13. Respect other People's Time & Bandwidth

Electronic communication takes time: time to read and time in which to respond. Most people today lead busy lives, just like you do, and don't have time to read or respond to frivolous emails or discussion posts. As a virtual world communicator, it is your responsibility to make sure that the time spent reading your words isn't wasted. Make your written communication meaningful and to the point, without extraneous text or superfluous graphics, or attachments that may take forever to download.

14. Make yourself Look Good Online

One of the best things about the virtual world is the lack of judgment associated with your physical appearance, the sound of your voice, or the clothes you wear (unless you post a video of yourself singing Karaoke in a clown outfit.) You will, however, be judged by the quality of your writing, so keep the following tips in mind:

- Always check for spelling and grammar errors
- Know what you're talking about and state it clearly
- Be pleasant and polite

15. Share Expert Knowledge

The Internet offers its users many benefits; one is the ease with which information can be shared or accessed and in fact, this "information sharing" capability is one of the reasons the Internet was founded. So in the spirit of the Internet's "founding fathers," share what you know! When you post a question and receive intelligent answers, share the results with others. Are you an expert at something? Post resources and references

about your subject matter. Recently expanded your knowledge about a subject that might be of interest to others? Share that as well.

16. Help keep flame wars under control

What is meant by "flaming" and "flame wars?" "Flaming is what people do when they express a strongly held opinion without holding back any emotion." (Shea, 1994). As an example, think of the kinds of passionate comments you might read on a sports blog. While "flaming" is not necessarily forbidden in virtual communication, "flame wars," when two or three people exchange angry posts between one another, must be controlled or the camaraderie of the group could be compromised. Don't feed the flames; extinguish them by guiding the discussion back to a more productive direction.

17. Don't abuse your Power

Just like in face-to-face situations, there are people in cyberspace who have more "power" than others. They have more expertise in technology or they have years of experience in a particular skill or subject matter. Maybe it's you who possesses all of this knowledge and power! Just remember: knowing more than others do or having more power than others may have does not give you the right to take advantage of anyone. Think of Rule 1: Remember the human.

18. Be forgiving of other people's mistakes

Not everyone has the same amount of experience working in the virtual world. And not everyone knows the rules of netiquette. At some point, you will see a stupid question, read an unnecessarily long response, or encounter misspelled words; when this happens, practice kindness and forgiveness as you would hope someone would do if you had committed the same offense. If it's a minor "offense," you might want to let it slide. If you feel compelled to respond to a mistake, do so in a private email rather than in a public forum.

Online interactions hold equal importance as face-to-face interactions. In the fast-paced online and work-from-home culture, it is a must to follow the above-mentioned ten rules of online etiquette. It will help you manage online relationships at the workplace. If you spend a lot of time on the internet, these golden rules of netiquette will make your experience safe and productive.

Video Meeting Netiquette

When meeting with colleagues online, following a few general guidelines can help keep your interactions professional. Proper etiquette for video meetings includes:

- ✓ Checking your device's audio and video before the meeting to ensure that they work
- ✓ Creating a background that is uncluttered so it isn't disruptive, or selecting a background offered by the video meeting platform
- ✓ Choosing a professional screen name (your first and last name is a good option; avoid nicknames or any screen name that could be offensive or unprofessional)
- ✓ Joining the meeting on time
- ✓ Muting yourself when you're not speaking
- ✓ Not talking over other meeting participants