

Mannerism of Online Communication

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Abstract

Communication is the inseparable part of human life. It is not restricted to human world only, rather each living object of Nature communicate to each other in some form. The imagination of human world without communication is almost impossible. There are various forms of communication just as verbal, non-verbal, sign language etc. Along with these forms, due to the advancement of technology, a new form of communication has emerged out which is known as online communication. Therefore, there are two popular streams of communication in this modern era of technology. Online communication v/s offline communication. The world is trying to shift towards the paperless management of personal and professional needs which is demand of earth's environment as well in order to save the resources of earth. In this scenario, online communication takes a significant role and it becomes necessary to understand the mannerism of online communication which is known as netiquette as well because there is an involvement of internet in this online form of communication. Online communication is not confined to the formal communication only, it has become a part of the informal communication also. So, it becomes necessary to understand the difference between the formal online communication and informal online communication. This paper focuses on the etiquette of different kind of online communication.

Key Words: Online Communication, Offline Communication, Etiquette, Netiquette, Formal communication, Informal Communication

Communication is transfer of information from one person to another, whether or not it elicits confidence. But the information transferred must be understandable to the receiver

George Granger Brown.

The above definition of communication comprises the most basic function and importance of communication. Interpersonal communication is the integral part of human civilization. Since the beginning of human civilization, humans have been sharing their feelings through various means. In this process, the communication has adapted several forms just as verbal communication, nonverbal communication, formal communication, informal communication etc. In this era of technological boom, communication has taken a quite new form for conveying messages and this form is known as online communication. The credit for this technological boom and emergence of online form of communication goes to internet. As the invention of internet took place in 1998, the twentieth century witnessed a radical change in the personal and professional life of people. It gave a high speed to the day-to-day works of the individuals in all fronts. The world economy and international trade took a leap towards advancement with the invention of internet. Now a days, everything is needed at a faster speed and internet serves to meet this demand of fast speed. Things can be conveyed within the seconds via internet at far and wide places.

The communication which takes place through internet, is called online communication. This online communication has become an inseparable part of everyone's life whether it is personal or professional. The invention of smart phones plays a major role in the popularity of online communication when people can carry internet in their pockets. These gadgets provide the facility to communicate with others at any point of time and place. The access of internet and use of Wi-Fi accelerate the use of online communication which has changed the face of international trade and business.

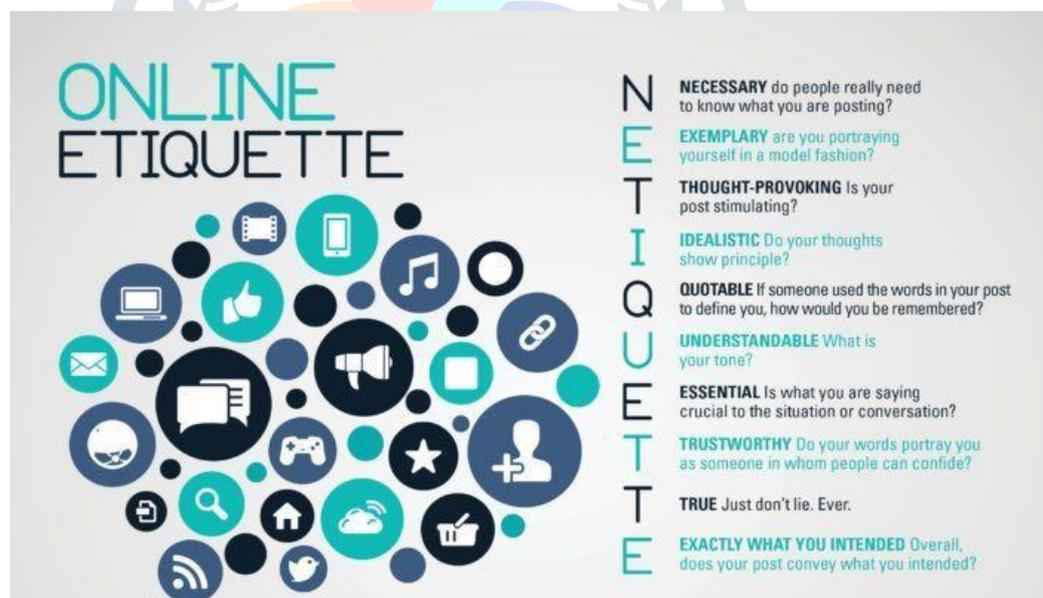
“The concept of disruptive technology has significantly added to the rapidly changing business environment. Computer, internet, and smart phones are the new tools of technology which initiate changes in the efficient delivery of content.”

The effective use of internet in the rapidly changing world is depended on online communication. When the communication takes place in written form with the help of language and signs but without the use of paper and pen, it becomes online communication. The denial of paper and pen makes the online communication environment friendly because it saves the natural resources of earth. It is a wellknown fact that planet earth has reached on the verge of destruction because of the excessive use of the natural resources. Online communication gets a very important role in this perspective as it does not need any stationary and all kinds of messages and documents can be sent through internet only.

Online communication has a wide range and it can be divided into two categories which are formal online communication and informal online communication.

Formal online communication- Firstly, the understanding of formal communication is necessary to understand formal online communication. The formal communication is the exchange of official information that flows along the different levels of the organizational hierarchy and conforms to the prescribed professional rules, policy, standards, processes, and regulations of the organization.

In an organization, formal communication involves emails, meetings, conferences, memos, notice boards, letters, presentations, handouts, speeches etc. though in our professional career, we all know the meaning and manners of these various things but when these things come in electronic form, they become online communication. However, the requirements of online formal communication are similar as that of offline formal communication, yet some other precautions are needed to be taken care of during online formal communication and these extra precautions are netiquettes. ‘The etiquette of formal online communication, with the help of internet.’



The above given picture reveals the necessary elements or requirements of online formal communication which is known as netiquettes as well. To discuss in detail, the first of all to be taken care of, is caution. In the formal online communication, caution stands for carefulness of tone, address, and selection of words. These three elements are decided by the nature of communication. The nature of communication may be of three kinds- downward communication, upward communication, and horizontal communication. The communication which takes place from the top hierarchy of the organization to their subordinates, is called

downward communication. On the other hand, upward communication is just contrary to downward communication. It flows from subordinates to the superiors. While the purpose of downward communication is to provide useful information to the subordinates on time, upward communication comprises suggestions, reactions, reports, complaints etc which help the authorities in taking decisions.

Another nature of formal online communication is horizontal communication. This type of communication takes place among the individuals of same level. The purpose of horizontal communication is to solve the problems of similar nature and share the experience mutually for evolvment of individual and organization. In formal online communication the tone, address and selection of words depend on the nature and purpose of communication. Besides this, there should be a proper use of salutations in formal online communication. At the same time, any kind of humour or joke can not be justified in upward or downward formal communication.

In downward formal communication, the tone and selection of words should not be commanding at all. Courtesy and politeness are necessary elements of downward formal online communication. Another kind of communication that is horizontal communication deals with the people of same level so it can be suggestive and supportive at the same time. Selection of greetings are equally important as per the nature of communication.

Accuracy and facts are the next important element of formal online communication. In this modern era of technology, each and every information is available on internet. That is why one should be confident and sure enough about the information and facts which are provided. For the accuracy of facts, crosscheck is must and should try to provide the source of information at the time of communication to win the credibility.

The next step of formal online communication is self-effort. Sometimes we find ourselves in need of some information and that information is around us. So, before asking someone else, one should try to fetch the information and fact on oneself. If the required information or facts are not found, then someone else should be asked for help. This habit helps to get the accuracy at the same time.

With the above said precautions, another thing which should also be kept in mind during the formal online communication is avoidance of any kind of sarcasm. There should be no place for any personal sarcasm in formal communication. Politeness also should be there in online

formal communication and it should be reflected in the selection of words, greetings, and salutations. At the same time proper use of grammar and punctuation is must in order to convey the exact message, free from any kind of ambiguity.

Sometimes in the flow of online communication we deviate from our subject which takes the process of communication in a meaningless and valueless direction as well as it may become the reason for redundancy also. In a bit, adherence to the topic is must to maintain the integrity and clarity of the communication.

Clarity and brevity are the next essential characteristics of online formal communication. The conveyed message should be clear and brief, having selected words only and with accuracy. There should be an element of respect as well for the opinions of others specially in downward and horizontal communication as the success of any organization depends on the teamwork. The next requirement for successful formal online communication is the subject line. Specially in the case of notices, reports, and emails. Subject line should indicate the subject matter with clarity in order to get the attention of the readers.

The things which have been discussed in the above paragraphs are the inseparable elements of formal online communication.

As far as informal online communication is concerned, some leniencies can be observed in this. Just like formal online communication, informal online communication also takes place in various forms. For example, WhatsApp chat, Facebook chat, twitter etc. In other words, it can be said that social media is an important platform for informal online communication. Usually informal online communication takes place among the people of same taste and interest. Whereas formal online communication works as documentation of things, informal online communication can not be taken as documented information or matter. The circumference of informal online communication is as wide and spread as the social media. Being free from the boundaries of documentation, informal online communication enjoys various kinds of liberties. For instance, the language used in this kind of communication is free from the accuracy of grammar, punctuation, greetings, and salutations etc.

In this form of communication people may use various gestures, emojis, signs etc to express their emotions more effectively which is not always possible via language. Sometimes members of young generation invent their own kind of language and terminology (gonna, kinda, wanna etc) which is easy to use and understand for them and saves time. Though there

is nothing like that of grammatical accuracy in this in this type of language in online communication, but it is quite popular in today's young and fast tech-friendly generation.

Undoubtedly informal online communication is free from any boundation but still it has some moral and ethical limits in itself which should be accepted and adopted by every user of internet and social media.

The most important thing while using internet is that there is nothing private in the world of internet. So, whenever one wants to share something very important and personal, he or she should meet in person rather than sharing through internet. This thing should be taken care of in case of social media specially.

The other important thing is that the privacy of others is equally important as of self. There are some limitations of all kinds of communication which should be respected at all fronts and with each and every group of people.

To conclude, it can be said that all the manners discussed above are considered as netiquettes of formal online communication and informal online communication. In today's time, when we are living in the era of internet, the knowledge and command over these netiquettes become necessary on both personal and professional front. One cannot get success in one's career without the proficiency over online communication which is incomplete without the knowledge of netiquette.

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