

Internet Etiquette and Relationships

Technology such as e-mail has made it easy to keep in touch with family and friends who are far away. Like strong speaking and listening skills, strategies for effective online communication can strengthen relationships. In this activity, you will develop a list of Internet etiquette strategies that promote healthful, respectful communication.

Problems with Online Communication	Possible Solutions
Privacy issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid sending e-mails dealing with private or sensitive issues. They can be forwarded to anyone.
Chain e-mails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not send or forward such e-mails to others. • Politely ask friends and relatives not to send or forward them to you.
Viruses in attachments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure antivirus software is installed. • Do not open attachments from unknown or unreliable sources.

ACTIVITY

In a group, brainstorm potential problems with online communication and ways to resolve those problems. Use the chart above as a model, and try to come up with as many issues and solutions as possible. You might consider how traditional communication strategies (such as specific speaking and listening skills) can apply to online activities like e-mail and instant messaging. After completing your chart, use it to develop a list of Internet Etiquette Rules.

Make copies of your list, and share it with family and friends.

EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS

Write a one-page essay explaining the importance of online etiquette. Discuss how its use impacts relationships with family, friends, and peers. Your essay should promote communication strategies that maintain and strengthen healthy relationships.