

How's Your "IM Netiquette?"

(NAPSA)—Instant messaging, "IM," is an instantaneous alternative to e-mail and great for quick questions, timely responses, casual chats and short dialogues.

With its growing popularity, IM is developing its own set of etiquette rules. Unfortunately, many people are unfamiliar with proper online communication etiquette, known as "netiquette," and are unaware that they are committing IM gaffes. You can test your own IM netiquette by answering these five questions.

1) In instant messaging, there is no difference between using ALL CAPITAL LETTERS and using all lower case letters. T F

2) If you are going to state your opinion, it's a good idea to begin your message with IMHO. T F

3) It is acceptable, even encouraged, to use "emoticons" (smiley faces, wink faces, etc.) in IM correspondence. T F

4) If you wanted to be flirtatious, you might send a message that includes ;-) T F

5) Displaying "Idle" next to your ID is the best way to let people know you are not available on IM. T F

Answers:

1) False. USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS IS LIKE SHOUTING. Using all lower case letters is very casual; best used between friends. If you're IMing in a business setting, err on the side of tradition and write in proper sentences.



Knowing simple IM netiquette dos and don'ts can help you become an IM expert in an instant!

2) True. IMHO stands for "In my humble opinion."

3) True. Emoticons add personality to your correspondence and communicate sentiments.

4) True. This is a sideways "wink," also known as an emoticon that turns into ☺

5) False, with IM you can customize your availability status and let your friends know exactly why you're unavailable: "In a meeting," "on the phone," "out to lunch," etc.

How's your IM netiquette?

0-2 - Time to brush up on your IM. See tips below.

3-4 - You're okay but, IMHO could benefit from the tips below.

5-7 - GR8, but see tips below to boost your IM speak.

8 - XLNT!

IM Netiquette Tips

- 1) When away from your desk, change your "status" option, "AFK" (away from keyboard), "OTL" (out to lunch), "BRB" (be right back) or "On Mobile."
- 2) Keep it short.
- 3) Avoid using all caps.
- 4) Wait for a reply before you write a rambling series of messages. Just say "hi" to initiate the conversation.
- 5) Use emoticons to personalize messages—services like Yahoo! Messenger offer fun "animated" emoticons that wink, dance, even blow a kiss.
- 6) When choosing an IM service, look for special services such as Yahoo! Messenger that offer Webcam capabilities, mobile IM for wireless phones, interactive environments called IMVironments, emoticons and integration with other personal online services.
- 7) Improve your "IM-Q" (and impress the kids!) by using these common IM terms:

ATB All The Best

B4N Bye For Now

BIL Boss is Listening

BTW By The Way

CYA See ya

GR8 Great!

GTG Got to go

KISS Keep It Simple Stupid

LBR Later

LOL Laughing Out Loud

OTL Out to Lunch

OTP On the phone

PLZ Please

PRL Parents Are Listening

ROFL Rolling On The Floor Laughing

THNQ Thank You

W8N Waiting

XLNT Excellent!