

Netiquette for public chat forums

Access to a chat forum

- **Observe special rules of a chat forum!**
If there are special chat rules in a chat forum, you should respect them. Look for background information about a chat forum (usually in the form of a forum homepage).
- **A "hello" is enough!**
It is not necessary and rather annoying to greet everyone individually in a chat forum, a "hello" is sufficient. Also very unpopular are automatic welcome scripts, which automatically welcome all participants of a chat forum.
- **First read along, then respond!**
As in all services for one-to-many communication, the rule also applies in chat: "First read along, then answer!" This is the best way to get to know the culture of the chat forum.

Communicating in a chat forum

- **Is it written? Spoken? Painted?**
Chats come in various forms of media. Usually, chats are based on written text, but there are also voice chats and other communicative forms. If the chat forum allows different forms of media, first see which one is used and then choose the form of communication.
- **Write conservatively, read liberally!**
In chats, different opinions and emotions escalate much faster than, for example, in e-mails. React calmly to controversial opinions and content and do not allow yourself to be provoked. At the same time, you should not provoke and de-escalate when moods escalate. And in an emergency, you can also ask for apologies.
- **Adjust your writing/speaking speed!**
Your counterpart may not be as fast in writing/speaking/understanding in a chat as you are. This may be due to the fact that he participates in several chats at the same time or simply cannot write quickly. Even if it costs overcoming: Give a person in the chat time to answer a question, nothing is more confusing than "rushing" text columns in a chat.
- **Write correctly!**
Often you want to write quickly, but you should still pay attention to the correct spelling to allow a reading flow. Pay attention to upper and lower case, put punctuation marks and try to spell correctly. Many chats sometimes neglect upper and lower case, be liberal in such cases.
- **Large amounts of text only after warning!**
Warn other chat participants if you intend to post large amounts of text in a chat forum. If everyone agrees, you can write without worries, because unwanted larger amounts of text in chat forums are perceived as even more annoying than unwanted e-mails.
- **No ads!**
In most non-commercial chat forums, commercial advertising is undesirable and links

to advertisements usually cause the advertiser to be kicked out of the chat forum very quickly. Accordingly, badly advertised things are then also received.

- **Never send files without being asked!**
Send files to individual chat participants only if expressly requested. The unsolicited sending of files, especially on IRC or by e-mail, is considered very rude and often ends in heavy annoyance.
- **Respect the anonymity of others!**
Respect the decision on anonymity when someone appears in the chat with an alias name (a so-called "nick"). Do not give out names or other personal information without consent if someone asks you for another chat participant's name.
- **Don't ask someone privately in public!**
Do not ask other chat participants publicly for private information (e.g., gender, age, or location). Most chat participants understandably only disclose such information to close friends and such requests should generally be made in private channels.
- **Do not chat in a forum about personal content of individual users**
Chatting in a forum is comparable to a pub visit. Don't just chat about individuals' private things in a larger forum, but respect their privacy.
- **Be suspicious if you observe abuses!**
You are certainly not supposed to play the sheriff, but still be suspicious if you observe abuses, such as fraud attempts or inappropriate addressing of people. This is especially true when children are the target of such speeches.

Chatting between two people

- **Not everyone you want to chat with wants to chat with you!**
Don't assume that everyone who doesn't know you wants to chat with you. If you send a private message to someone on a chat forum you don't know, you should also expect that they might be busy or simply don't want to reply to your message.
- **Don't push your chat partner!**
Treat chat partners the way you would like to be treated. Especially in text-heavy environments, misunderstandings arise very quickly. A generally good idea is to deliver misinterpretable content personally in a conversation.
- **Even in a chat between two people, you are not in a legal vacuum!**
Pay attention to what you write - always and everywhere and especially when chatting with previously unknown people. Maybe someone wants something bad for you. A healthy dose of mistrust is generally not a bad practice when chatting. Do not do any punishable things yourself in chats.

The Board of Directors

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January 12, 2023