

Netiquette in information services

Basic information about information on the Internet

- **Who pays, decides!**
Never forget that every piece of information belongs to someone. Who pays the bill for a service ultimately determines the content. Information can be based on free opinion - but it does not have to be.
- **Be suspicious of the information provided!**
Do not assume that information published on the Internet is always up-to-date and error-free. While the Internet makes it possible for anyone to be a publisher of information, not everyone has to be aware of this responsibility. Be especially careful about safety-related or medical topics – not every expert is actually one. The Internet is in the fewest cases an adequate and complete replacement for professionals and specialists.
- **Be tolerant in your search for information!**
The Internet is a globally accessible and decentralized network. Keep this in mind if you find cultural or political information that you can't agree with but is acceptable in the areas of origin. Be tolerant and respect the opinions of other people and peoples.
- **Information on the Internet is not outlawed!**
Observe copyrights of authors and providers on the Internet. In principle, every piece of information has a copyright, even if this copyright is not explicitly asserted. In other words: Even without the indication of a "copyright" line, information is protected by copyright and it should be noted that it should be asked beforehand whether the information may be used for one's own purposes. If you do not get permission and still use the information illegally, you may be on very thin ice.
- **Inform yourself about legal and technical conditions before your own publications!**
Before you want to put your own homepage on the Internet, you should first inform your system administrator about the technical and legal conditions that you must comply with, for example about things that you are not allowed to publish. Many providers have appropriate documentation, but be sure to observe the legal requirements in the country in which you live. If the information created is stored on a server in another country, the legal provisions there must also be observed.

Addressing

- **Pay attention to server addresses!**
There are also common conventions for information services for marking in the address (e.g. "www" for web servers). But again, you shouldn't always rely on it. In many spellings, for example, the "www" is omitted or additional web servers are given additional names such as "www2" etc.
- **Pay attention to the spelling of addresses!**
Case-sensitive when you retrieve individual files through Information Services. Domain names don't care how they are spelled, but this may not apply to the portion of a URL that describes the resource locally on a server. For example, on Unix operating systems, the index.html and INDEX.HTML files are not necessarily the same.

Safety

- **When it comes to sensitive information, pay attention to the location of the information!**
There are many crooks and crooks on the Internet who want to trick you into revealing personal access data somewhere via e-mail. This *phishing* is a great danger to your personal data and you should therefore keep it particularly safe. If you only ever access your bank's banking site directly, do not access these access pages via hyperlinks from websites or e-mails.
- **transfer sensitive data only over secure connections!**
Note that all transmitted data on the Internet is generally unprotected and not safe from snoopers and spies unless additional encryption technology is used, such as SSL. Most modern browsers mark a secure, encrypted transmission with appropriate symbols. Be sure to resist the temptation to transfer credit card, account, or other personal information over unprotected connections.
- **Do not misuse foreign resources!**
Do not use third-party information services and servers to make your own data accessible to other users, unless it is expressly released for these purposes. Also, do not misuse third-party information services in which the public can participate, such as a wiki system or a public forum. These information systems thrive on the openness, knowledge and commitment of volunteers and should not be the target of abuse.

Troubleshooting

- **In case of problems, check your own system first!**
If you're having trouble with an information service, check your local system first before contacting your provider or site provider. Try calling other services to see if there might be a general problem.
- **Be as helpful as possible with error messages!**
If you want to contact your system administrator about a technical problem, you should collect as much information about the error and your retrieving system and attach it to the problem description so that troubleshooting can be carried out as easily and quickly as possible.

Downloads

- **Beware of viruses in files to be downloaded!**
A certain amount of caution is always advisable when downloading files from the Internet. This is especially true if they are not downloaded directly from manufacturer sites, but from alternative locations. To be on the safe side, check such downloaded files with a (current!) Antivirus program to at least make sure that they are not infected with known viruses. Nevertheless, pay attention to oddities when installing executable files.
- **When downloading files, pay attention to the necessary operating system!**
While there are common conventions for tagging file formats, don't trust a provider to label all of their files correctly. For example, a *. DOC file on other operating systems does not always have a Word file as is common on Windows platforms. For

packaged and compressed files, pay particular attention to whether you have the resources or a program with which you can open these files. Please also note that it is common for programs that have been developed primarily for Unix or Linux operating systems that only have to be offered for download in source code and must first be processed ("compiled") into an executable program on the target computer with aids.

- **Pay attention to information files!**

For directory-oriented information services (FTP, Gopher), look for information files in each directory, usually starting with "00", so that they are always at the top of a directory. Such plain text files contain accurate directory summaries and more detailed information about the files in the respective directory. Often, in the case of files that are available for download, it is not clear from the file name what they are actually intended to do.

- **Make big transfers at convenient times!**

Particularly fast and reliable access to information services on the Internet is available on the Internet during off-peak hours (in Germany between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. CET, in the USA between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. CET), especially from providers who do not have a particularly good Internet connection. Schedule long downloads from appropriate servers at convenient times, especially if you pay for your Internet access by time or amount of data. Nothing is more annoying than a slow or aborted download, especially if the server does not support the ability to resume a download from the aborted location.

- **Use local mirror servers!**

From frequently used servers, there are often officially approved mirrors that offer the same page content on another server and also at a different address. Use the geographically closest one if mirror servers are actually offered. You thus conserve the resources of the provider and usually benefit from a much faster download.

The Board of Directors

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