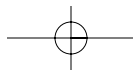
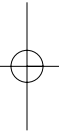
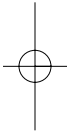
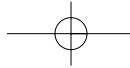


Communicating in Cyberspace



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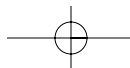
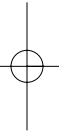


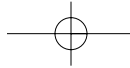
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Layout: Fontline Electronic Publishing, Harare, Zimbabwe
Printed by: Précé-ex, Les Pailles, Mauritius

© UNESCO 2002
ISBN: 92-9124-033-8





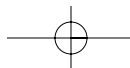
PREFACE

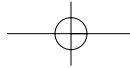
Over the last 10 years, NESIS has been involved in capacity-building programmes in Africa through training workshops, developing technical manuals and sharing experiences. At the annual NESIS meeting, held in March 2001, presentation emerged as a priority area among countries engaged in capacity building. In response to their concerns, a Technical Working Group (TWG) was appointed to develop a proposal for increased training opportunities on the presentation of statistical data. A technical team at the NESIS Regional Centre in Harare is now developing training material on how to organise, analyse and present statistical data, and on how to communicate this information among countries.

The following year, a workshop on Statistics, Publications, and Information Systems held in Nairobi in February focused on producing information products and services for consumers and users of statistics. The NESIS Regional Centre in Harare under the sponsorship of the Working Group on Education Statistics of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), organised the workshop.

During the Nairobi workshop, two sessions on Cyberspace Communication and Website Development discussed using modern communication tools to enhance interaction among countries, working groups and NESIS branches. The session on Cyberspace Communication consisted of a PowerPoint presentation and looked at various aspects of cyberspace communication, with emphasis on **online communication, netiquette – network etiquette** – and **online learning**. A practical session on **configuration and usage of MSN Messenger** followed.

It is against this background that NESIS developed a manual on Cyberspace Communication. The manual guides users on how to transfer updated information through the Internet, with particular focus on synchronous communication. It is also a reference guide for future capacity-building workshops. Additional material coming from feedback from workshop participants and resource persons will be incorporated in it. NESIS has also produced a manual on Website Development.





THE NESIS PROGRAMME



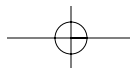
Initiated in 1991 as a project to develop technical modules, the National Education Statistical Information Systems (NESIS) programme has evolved into a multi-donor, Africa-wide capacity-building programme to develop self-sustainable statistical information systems for education policy needs. The role of NESIS is to be a catalyst in the development process by bringing together institutions, agencies and experts in joint ventures and networks as agents of change.

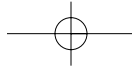


To date, over 47 countries have participated in different NESIS activities, such as diagnostic surveys, formulations of national action plans and development and testing of methods and tools in priority areas. Team experts from different countries meet regularly in technical workshops to share experiences. Parallel to the activities at country level, generic technical modules based on national experiences have been compiled and published.



Facilitated by the NESIS Regional Centre and its branch offices, technical working groups (TWG) are conducting capacity-building activities in diverse areas of importance to specific countries in the sub-region. NESIS has become a comprehensive, country policy-driven programme, supported by the participating African countries and directly financed by 11 agencies.



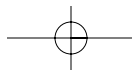


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to the ADEA WGES and NESIS programmes, for the central role they have played in the production of this manual, and which they continue to play in the manual's current and future enhancements. In particular I would like to thank the following:

- Dr. Ko-Chih R. Tung – the ADEA WGES Regional Co-ordinator for sub-Saharan Africa and Director and Representative, a.i. UNESCO Office Harare – for his constant advice throughout the concept, planning, development and production of the manual and his consistent interest in the area of information and communication technology.
- The NESIS Regional Centre team, consisting of Rudo C. Rhuwaya, Creed Chingwena, Simplisio Rwezuya, Tegegn N. Wako, and Charlotta Mockrish – for all the technical and administrative input that has made the publication of this manual a reality.
- The Nairobi workshop participants – their participation in performing the tasks and feedback has helped to improve the overall content of the manual.
- All staff at the UNESCO Office Harare, for their moral support during the production of the manual.
- My wife and children, for accomodating my after work hours at the office.

Shem Bodo



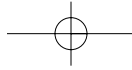


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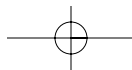
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ONLINE COMMUNICATION

What Is Online Communication?

Online communication is the use of various communication technologies to pass and receive information online. These communication technologies also can supplement and enhance delivery of education. There are many forms of communication technologies – some of them are outlined below:

- Email
- Telephone
- Facsimile
- Audiographs
- Video teleconferencing
- Two-way interactive television
- Bulletin boards
- Discussion boards
- Asynchronous forums (threaded discussion)
- Synchronous chat (real-time).



Online communication allows for communication anywhere and at any time. It can decrease isolation and facilitate a learning process. A sense of community can be achieved via asynchronous and synchronous communication. Forums or threaded discussions give people an opportunity to communicate and collaborate, allowing time to think, reflect and write in their own time.

Asynchronous forums allow for a history or thread of discussions on a topic to be recorded. Replies and new postings can be made within discussion threads. Within one forum, a series of conferences or forum topics can be started.

Synchronous chat (real-time) allows two or more logged-in users to have a real-time online conversation with all users either logging onto the same computer or different computers via a Local Area Network (LAN) or Wide Area Network (WAN).

How Is Online Communication Different?

Psychologists have been studying human behaviour for over 100 years. Social psychology, for example, is the study of human social interaction. Storm King's study, *The Psychology of Virtual Communities*, and John Suler's book, *The Psychology of Cyberspace*, both explore aspects of online communication. They provide an insight into the ways that online behaviour is similar to and different from "real world" behaviour. Others have noticed some interesting aspects of online communication that do not seem to be a part of face-to-face communication.



Communicating in Cyberspace

Following are some examples:



- Many shy people find it easy to express themselves online. Typing on your own computer does not feel like a social situation. There is less anxiety than there might be in a face-to-face situation. Physical attractiveness is also less important online. This is probably the basis of the famous cartoon where one dog is showing the Internet to another dog, saying “On the Internet nobody knows you’re a dog”.



- Issues dealing with relationships are often easier to discuss online than face to face. This can lead to increased online flirting in otherwise platonic relationships.



- Gender switching and pseudonyms are common. Online chat rooms are full of people who identify themselves only by a nickname. On the Internet, you can pretend to be anyone or anything you want to be. An analogy might be a cultural or traditional costume party. The costume hides people’s real identities and they find their inhibitions reduced.



According to Suler, in cyberspace men seem to pretend to be women in order to inject sexuality into interactions. Women sometimes pretend to be men in order to avoid the possible injection of online sexuality. For example, a lady can send an email, signing off as “John” while the email software would identify her as “Doris Another”. In this case, Doris signs her message “John” for some reason – presumably to avoid adding any element of flirting or sexuality to a professional relationship.



- The lack of non-verbal cues and tone of voice sometimes result in miscommunication. “Flame wars” (online discussions that gravitate towards an exchange between two people only) often result from an online post that was intended to be taken lightly or humorously but was taken seriously or critically. The liberal use of smiley faces “:)” to connote that a statement is meant humorously helps a little, but it may not be enough to prevent a flame war.



- The Internet is the great equaliser. On the net, a high school student can correspond with a Nobel Prize winner on an equal footing, and mental health professionals and others can interact online with some of the most prominent clinicians and researchers in the field.



Why Use Online Communication?

Online communication via discussion forums and synchronous text can offer an increased sense of community and cohesion for those participating. Online environments and the communication that supports such environments encourage and support inquiry and problem-solving skills.



Two elements of success of online communication are participation and facilitator/instructor involvement. Online education, for example, can become a more student-centred form of education delivery.



Online communication can provide:

- flexibility of access anywhere, anytime
- interaction of participants involved

- enhancement, and complements face-to-face activities
- prompt and efficient feedback
- sharing of information, including electronic files
- a sense of group community (e.g. among students, professionals, panelists etc.)
- group task accomplishment
- collaborative learning and problem-solving
- peer review and tutoring
- opportunities for critical and creative thinking
- opportunities to develop written communication skills

Threaded discussions can be used to provide:

- opportunities for interaction and communication
- flexible assessment and performance feedback
- quality learning resources
- academic, administration and learner support

Terms Used in Online Communication

Addition of forums: Only the administrator/moderator/tutor/lecturer can add new forums.

Archive of posted messages: Archiving of messages can be set up when a conference is created. Messages are archived automatically if you enabled archiving when creating the conference. The Archived Messages window displays a list of all of these messages.

Asynchronous discussion: Communication that is not dependent on time and place.

Attachments in the discussion area: These can be added during the discussion by typing messages and then adding the attachment as you would do while using an email programme.

Chat: Real-time synchronous conferencing.

Communication discussion board and Group discussion board: All participants in an online discussion can access the communication discussion board, while only members of specific groups can participate in those group discussions.

Conference: Created by the administrator/moderator/lecturer/tutor. The conference establishes the main subject of focus during posting of new topics and messages.

Discussion board: The discussion board is designed for asynchronous use, so users do not have to be available at the same time to have a conversation. Within a discussion board there can be several forums.



Communicating in Cyberspace

Editing and/or removing posted messages: This can only be done if allowed by the administrator/moderator/tutor/lecturer during forum creation.



Email notification: Email notification is set up when a conference is created. Email can be set to be sent each time a message is posted, be digested and sent in bulk at a certain time each day or be zipped.



Forum: Discussions are grouped into forums. Within each forum are threads of conversations or messages and all related replies. Conversations in the forums are logged and organised.



Group discussions: Groups (seminar participants, panelists, professionals, students etc.) can be organised into specific discussion areas, and can have access to a discussion board, file transfer, email and virtual chat.



Mailing lists: These can be set up when a conference is created. Mailing list subscribers not only receive conference content by email, they can also post to conferences by email.



Message board: The administrator or moderator for the discussion forum creates the message board. Within the message board, you can create a series of conferences on selected discussion topics.



Starting new threads: Participants can start new threads.



Synchronous discussion: Communication that is continuous, instantaneous sharing of information via text (real time).



Threaded discussion: Chronological pieces of dialogue or messages and replies posted to a topic.

Examples of Online Communication Software

A. General Purpose Conferencing

HelpMeeting

A collaboration service based on Microsoft NetMeeting.



Microsoft Exchange Server

Features instant messaging and chat, audio and video conferencing, data sharing, whiteboard, scheduling, and more. Custom applications can be built.



MSHOW

Designed for large group web broadcasts and presentations. Presentations can include streaming video and audio, PowerPoint presentations, web tours, and application demos. Voting, polling, and instant messaging between participants is also supported.



NetMeeting

Free conferencing software from Microsoft.

B. Chat and Instant Messaging

AIM (AOL Instant Messenger)

Free instant messaging software and service from America Online.



ICQ

Free instant messaging software and service.



MSN Messenger Service

Free instant messaging software and service from Microsoft Corporation.

raiderSoft Free Java Chat

Free hosted service, allowing you to put chat rooms on your own website.



Yahoo! Messenger

Free chat and instant messaging software and service.



C. Video and Audio Conferencing

FocusFocus

Remotely hosted service that allows adding video conferencing and chat rooms to your website.

MeetingPlace

Telephone-based audio conferencing with web conferencing features.



Premiere Conferencing

Large- and small-scale telephone conferencing, with web conferencing options.



Vuechat

Instant messaging service offering web-cam video chat.



D. Web Casting

Activate

Remotely hosted service supporting live events and on-demand media streaming.

MentorPoint

Designed for distance learning. The presenter's screen is broadcast to all attendees, and attendees can communicate with the presenter via telephone.



MindBlazer

Offers live and on-demand web casting in partnership with Yahoo! Broadcast Services.





MSN Messenger Service

See who is online and exchange instant messages

See when your friends are online and exchange instant messages with them. You can chat with them individually or with up to four of them in the same conversation window. The automatic typing indicator lets you know when one of your friends is typing a response.

Make worldwide phone calls

Call anywhere in the world for a very low rate. You decide which phone service provider you want to use! Choose from a list of providers the one that works best for you.



Talk instead of type

Stop typing! Talk with a friend anywhere in the world using your computer microphone and speakers.

Page your friends

Send text messages to your friends on their cellphones and pagers! This feature is only available in the U.S. and Canada.

Join a chat

Go to Chat Rooms and meet new people or join a celebrity chat. This feature may not be available in all areas.

Share pictures or any other file

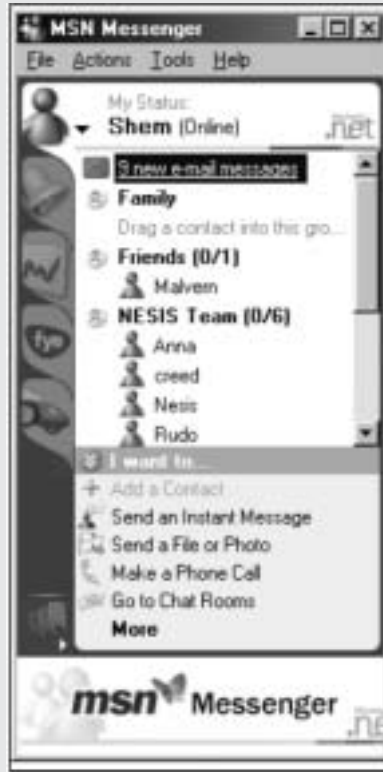
Trade photos of your friends or your favourite music, or any other file using MSN Messenger.

Watch for new email

See how many new email messages you have. And get notified whenever you receive a new MSN Hotmail® email message.

Invite friends to play a game

Use MSN Messenger to invite your friends to play a DirectPlay® compatible game online.



ICQ (I-Seek-You)

ICQ is a revolutionary, user-friendly Internet tool that informs you who's online at any time and enables you to contact them at will (*users are warned of the potential security risks involved in sending sensitive information using this channel*). ICQ does the searching for you, alerting you in real time when they log on. The need to conduct a directory search each time you want to communicate with a specific person is eliminated.

With ICQ, you can chat, send messages, files and URLs, play games, or just hang out with your fellow "Netters" while still surfing the Net.

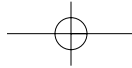
ICQ lets you choose the mode of communication you wish to employ. Regardless of the application, be it chat, voice, message board, data conferencing, file transfer or Internet games, ICQ will get your entire message across in real time. ICQ supports a variety of popular Internet applications and serves as a Universal Platform from which you can launch any peer-to-peer application (such as Microsoft NetMeeting or Netscape CoolTalk). It can also be used in a multiple-user mode, so groups can conduct conferences or just "hang out" online. The programme runs in the background, taking up minimal memory and Net resources. While you work with other applications, ICQ alerts you when friends and associates log in, allowing you to work efficiently while maintaining a wide range of Internet functions at your fingertips. Among the functions available are: chat, message, email and URL and file transfer.

How does it work?

When you install ICQ, the programme asks you to register at a server, which is connected to a broad network of servers spanning the Internet. At the time of registration, you receive a unique ICQ number, also known as a UIN (Universal Internet Number). In addition, ICQ gives you the option of entering personal information along with your ICQ#. This allows other ICQ users to recognise you when you log on. Once you've registered, you can compile a selected list of friends and associates. ICQ uses this list to find your friends for you. Meanwhile, ICQ waits quietly in the background without interrupting any other applications in use. As soon as you log onto the Internet, ICQ automatically detects the Internet connection, announces your presence to the Internet community and alerts you when friends sign on or off.

Once you know who's on, all it takes is a click of an icon to initiate chat, implement URL transfers, send messages, exchange files or launch any external peer-to-peer applications.





NETIQUETTE ON CYBERSPACE



Introduction

“Netiquette” or network etiquette refers to the dos and don’ts of online communication – that is, the etiquette of cyberspace. It covers both common courtesy online and the informal “rules of the road” of cyberspace. Etiquette refers to the forms required by good breeding or prescribed by authority in social, professional or official life. In other words, Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online.



When you enter any new culture – and cyberspace has its own culture – you are liable to commit a few social blunders. You might offend people without meaning to. Or you might misunderstand what others say and take offence when it’s not intended. To make matters worse, something about cyberspace makes it easy to forget that you’re interacting with other real people – not just ASCII characters on a screen, but live human characters.



So, partly because they forget that people online are still real, and partly because they don’t know the conventions, well-meaning *cybernauts*, especially new ones (*newbies*), make all kinds of mistakes.



Core Rules

Netiquette’s basic or core rules are a set of general guidelines for cyberspace behaviour. They perform a dual central role of: a) helping net *newbies* minimise their mistakes, and b) helping experienced cyberspace travellers help the *newbies*. These rules are based on the premise that: most people would rather make friends than enemies. If you follow a few basic rules, you’re less likely to make the kinds of mistakes that will prevent you from making friends.



Although the rules will not answer all the Netiquette questions, they provide some basic principles to use in solving individual Netiquette dilemmas experienced in online communication.



Rule 1: Remember the human

Our parents and kindergarten teachers taught us to observe three golden rules:

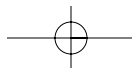
- Do unto others as you’d have others do unto you.
- Always put yourself in the other person’s shoes and imagine how you’d feel.
- Stand up for yourself, but try not to hurt other people’s feelings in the process.



In cyberspace, all three are combined into one cardinal rule: **Remember the human.**



When communicating electronically, all you see is a computer screen. There is no chance of using facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice to communicate what you mean (except with the recent emergence of web cams and pc-microphone interfacing). Otherwise all you have are words – lonely written words. And that goes for your correspondent too.



When holding a conversation online – whether through an email exchange or a response to a discussion group posting – it is easy to misinterpret your correspondent's meaning. And it is frighteningly easy to forget that your correspondent is a person with feelings more or less like your own.

Ironically, computer networks bring people together who would otherwise never meet, but the impersonality of the medium changes that meeting to something less personal. Humans exchanging email often behave the way some people behind the wheel of a car do: they curse at other drivers, make obscene gestures, and generally behave like savages. Most of them would never act that way at work or at home. But the interposition of the machine seems to make it acceptable.

The message of Netiquette is that it is not acceptable. Yes, use your network connections to express yourself freely, explore strange new worlds, and boldly go where you have never gone before. But remember, the prime directive of Netiquette: Those are real people out there.

Would you say it to the person's face?

People often send rude emails to public figures or celebrities they have never met – unfortunately, it happens all the time in cyberspace. Maybe it is the awesome power of being able to send mail directly to well-known personalities. Maybe it is the fact that you cannot see their faces crumple in misery as they read your cruel words. Whatever the reason, it is incredibly common.

Perhaps a useful test for anything you're about to post or mail is to ask yourself, "Would I say this to the person's face?" If the answer is no, rewrite and reread. Repeat the process until you feel sure that you would feel comfortable saying these words to the live person as you do sending them through cyberspace. Of course, it is possible that you would feel great about saying something extremely rude to the person's face. In that case, Netiquette can't help you.

Another reason not to be offensive online

When you communicate through cyberspace – via email or in discussion groups – your words are written. Chances are they are stored somewhere where you have no control over them. In other words, there is a good chance these words can come back to haunt you.

Lest we forget, email-user Oliver North's story reminds us:

North was a great devotee of the White House email system, PROFS. He diligently deleted all incriminating notes he sent or received. He did not realise, however, that somewhere else in the White House computer-room staff were equally diligent in backing up the mainframe where his messages were stored. When he went on trial, all those backup tapes were readily available as evidence against him.

You do not have to be engaged in criminal activity to want to be careful. Any message you send could be saved or forwarded by its recipient. *You have no control over where it goes.*

Rule 2: Adhere to the same standards of behaviour online that you follow in real life.



In real life, most people are fairly law abiding, either by disposition or because they are afraid of getting caught. In cyberspace, the chances of getting caught sometimes seem slim. Perhaps because people sometime forget that a human being is on the other side of the computer, some people think that a lower standard of ethics or personal behaviour is acceptable in cyberspace.



The confusion may be understandable, but these people are mistaken. Standards of behaviour may be different in some areas of cyberspace, but they are not lower than in real life.

Be ethical



Do not believe anyone who says, "The only ethics out there are what you can get away with". Netiquette in online communication is about manners, not about ethics. But if you encounter an ethical dilemma in cyberspace, consult the code you follow in real life. Chances are good you'll find the answer.



Breaking the law is bad Netiquette

If you are tempted to do something illegal in cyberspace, chances are it is also bad Netiquette. Some laws are obscure or complicated enough that it is hard to know how to follow them. In some cases, we are still establishing how the law applies to cyberspace. Netiquette mandates that you do your best to act within the laws of society and cyberspace.



Rule 3: Know where you are in cyberspace



Netiquette varies from domain to domain

What is perfectly acceptable in one area may be dreadfully rude in another. For example, in most TV discussion groups, passing on idle gossip is perfectly permissible. Throwing around unsubstantiated rumours in a journalists' mailing list, however, will make you very unpopular there. Because Netiquette is different in different places, it is important to know where you are – *Lurk before you leap.*



When you enter a domain of cyberspace that is new to you, take a look around. Spend a while listening to the chat or reading the archives. Get a sense of how the people who are already there act. Then go ahead and participate.



Rule 4: Respect other people's time and bandwidth



It is a cliché that people today seem to have less time than ever before, even though (or perhaps because) we sleep less and have more labour-saving devices than our grandparents did. When you send email or post to a discussion group, you're taking up other people's time (or hoping to). It is your responsibility to ensure that the time they spend reading your posting is not wasted.

The word “**bandwidth**” is sometimes used synonymously with time, but it is really a different thing. **Bandwidth is the information-carrying capacity of the wires and channels that connect everyone in cyberspace.** There is a limit to the amount of data that any piece of wiring can carry at any given moment – even a state-of-the-art fibre-optic cable. **The word bandwidth is also sometimes used to refer to the storage capacity of a host system.** When you accidentally post the same note to the same newsgroup five times, you are wasting the time (of the people who check all five copies of the posting) and bandwidth (by sending repetitive information over the wires, requiring it to be stored somewhere).

You are not the centre of cyberspace – when you are working hard on a project and deeply involved in it, it is easy to forget that other people have concerns other than yours. So, do not expect instant responses to all your questions, and do not assume that all readers will agree with – or care about – your passionate arguments.

Rules for discussion groups

Rule 4 has a number of implications for discussion group users. Most discussion group readers are already spending too much time sitting at the computer. Their significant others, families, and roommates are drumming their fingers, wondering when to serve dinner, while those network maniacs are catching up on the latest way to housebreak a puppy or cook zucchini.

Many news-reading programs are also slow, so just opening a posted note or article can take a while. Then the reader has to wade through all the **header information** to get to the meat of the message. No one is pleased when it turns out not to be worth the trouble.

To whom should messages be directed? (– why “*mailing list*” could become a dirty word)

In the old days, people made copies with carbon paper. You could only make about five legible copies. So you thought good and hard about who you wanted to send those five copies to.

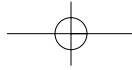
Today, it is as easy to copy practically anyone on your mail as it is not to. *And, we sometimes find ourselves copying people almost out of habit. In general, this is rude.* People have less time than ever today, precisely because they have so much information to absorb. Before you copy people on your messages, ask yourself whether they really need to know. If the answer is no, do not waste their time. If the answer is maybe, think twice before you hit the send key.

Rule 5: Make yourself look good online

Take advantage of your anonymity

The net should not be perceived as a cold, cruel place full of people who just cannot wait to insult each other. As in the world at large, most people who communicate online just want to be liked. Networks – particularly discussion groups – let you reach out to people you would otherwise never meet. And none of these people can see you. You will therefore not be judged by the colour of your skin, eyes, or hair, your weight, your age, or your clothing.





Communicating in Cyberspace

You will, however, be judged by the quality of your writing. For most people who choose to communicate online, this is an advantage – if they did not enjoy using the written word, they would not be there. *So spelling and grammar do count.*



Know what you're talking about and make sense

Pay attention to the content of your writing. Be sure you know what you are talking about – when you see yourself writing “*it's my understanding that*” or “*I believe it's the case*”, ask yourself whether you really want to post this note before checking your facts. Bad information propagates like wildfire on the net. And once it is been through two or three iterations, you get the same distortion effect as in the party game “Operator”: Whatever you originally said may be unrecognisable. (Of course, you could take this as a reason not to worry about the accuracy of your postings. You are only responsible for what you post yourself, not for what anyone else does with it.)



In addition, make sure your notes are clear and logical. It is perfectly possible to write a paragraph that contains no errors in grammar or spelling, but still makes no sense whatsoever. This is most likely to happen when you are trying to impress someone by using long words that you do not really understand yourself. Trust me – no one worth impressing will be impressed. *It is better to keep it simple.*



Be polite

Finally, be pleasant and polite. Do not use offensive language, and do not be confrontational for the sake of confrontation.



Q. Is swearing acceptable on the net?

Only in those areas where sewage is considered an art form, e.g., the USENET newsgroup “alt.tasteless”. Usually, if you feel that cursing in some form is required, it is preferable to use amusing euphemisms like “effing” and “sugar”. You may also use the classic asterisk filler – for example, b***s***. The archness is somehow appropriate to the net, and you avoid offending anyone needlessly. Everyone will know exactly what you mean.



Rule 6: Share expert knowledge

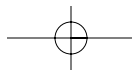
The strength of cyberspace is in its numbers. The reason asking questions online works is that many knowledgeable people are reading the questions. And if even a few of them offer intelligent answers, the sum total of world knowledge increases. The Internet itself was founded because scientists wanted to share information. Gradually, the rest of us got in on the act.



So do your part. Despite the long lists of no-nos above, you do have something to offer. Do not be afraid to share what you know.



It is especially polite to share the results of your questions with others. When you anticipate that you will get a lot of answers to a question, or when you post a question to a discussion group that you do not visit often, it is customary to request replies by email instead of to the group. *When*



you get all those responses, write up a summary and post it to the discussion group. That way, everyone benefits from the experts who took the time to write to you.

If you are an expert yourself, there is even more you can do. Many people freely post all kinds of resource lists and bibliographies, from lists of online legal resources to lists of popular MCSE books. If you are a leading participant in a discussion group that lacks a FAQ (*Frequently Asked Questions*), consider writing one. If you have researched a topic that you think would be of interest to others, write it up and post it. Sharing your knowledge is fun. It is a long-time net tradition. And it makes the world a better place.

Rule 7: Help keep flame wars under control

“**Flaming**” is what people do when they express a strongly held opinion without holding back any emotion. It is the kind of message that makes people respond, “Oh come on, tell us how you really feel”. Tact is not its objective.

Does Netiquette forbid flaming? Not at all. Flaming is a long-standing network tradition (and Netiquette never messes with tradition). Flames can be lots of fun, both to write and to read. And the recipients of flames sometimes deserve the heat.

But Netiquette does forbid the perpetuation of flame wars – series of angry letters, most of them from two or three people directed toward each other, which can dominate the tone and destroy the camaraderie of a discussion group. It is unfair to the other members of the group. While flame wars can initially be amusing, people who are not involved in them quickly get bored with them – they are an unfair monopolisation of bandwidth.

Rule 8: Respect other people’s privacy

Of course, you would never dream of going through your colleagues’ desk drawers. So naturally you would not read their email either. Unfortunately, a lot of people would. Consider the case of the “*snoopy foreign correspondent*”:

In 1993, a highly regarded foreign correspondent in the Moscow bureau of the Los Angeles Times was caught reading his co-workers’ email. His colleagues became suspicious when system records showed that someone had logged in to check their email at times when they knew they had not been near the computer. So they set up a sting operation. They planted false information in messages from another one of the paper’s foreign bureaux. The reporter read the notes and later asked colleagues about the false information. Bingo! As a disciplinary measure, he was immediately reassigned to another position at the paper’s Los Angeles bureau.

The lesson: Failing to respect other people’s privacy is not just bad Netiquette. It could also cost you your job.



Rule 9: Don't abuse your power

Some people in cyberspace have more power than others. There are wizards in MUDs (multi-user domains), experts in every office, and system administrators in every system.

Knowing more than others, or having more power than they do, does not give you the right to take advantage of them – for example, System Administrators should never read private email.

**Rule 10: Be forgiving of other people's mistakes**

Everyone was a network *newbie* once. When someone makes a mistake – whether it is a spelling error or a spelling flame, a stupid question or an unnecessarily long answer – be kind about it. If it is a minor error, you may not need to say anything. Even if you feel strongly about it, think twice before reacting. *Having good manners yourself does not give you license to correct everyone else.*



If you do decide to inform someone of a mistake, point it out politely, and preferably by private email rather than in public. Give people the benefit of the doubt; assume they just do not know any better – and never be arrogant or self-righteous about it. Just as it is a law of nature that spelling flames always contain spelling errors, notes pointing out Netiquette violations are often examples of poor Netiquette

**Acronyms**

If you have ever used news conferences or chat rooms before, you may have seen acronyms that were not familiar. Some of the most common ones used on the Internet are:

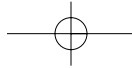


- BTW (by the way)
- FWIW (for what it's worth)
- IMHO (in my humble opinion)
- LOL (laughing out loud)
- OTOH (on the other hand)
- ROFL (rolling on the floor laughing)



IMHO these are the basics of Netiquette. OTOH, there are more out there in cyberspace. Just use common sense when posting.





ONLINE LEARNING

Introduction

The use of online communication tools in education is increasing rapidly. It has become an important topic as seen in educational journals and technical e-journals, such as “Web-based Learning and Collaboration”, cover of Computer, September 1999, and even popular magazines, such as “The Internet Age,” cover of Business Week, October 4, 1999.

As with other new educational technologies, however, it is not so much the tool that improves teaching and learning but how the instructor integrates the tool into the curriculum and into the educational setting. An important step in integrating technology successfully is beginning with an explicit definition of the pedagogical role for that technology. Core to this task is the understanding of the types of roles asynchronous discussion tools can successfully play in education.

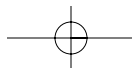
To what extent is asynchronous discussion utilised as a tool in teaching at school and university level? How do the teachers perceive the value this particular technology adds to their students' learning and to their teaching? In other words, what are the pedagogical opportunities afforded by the use of the technology? We must glean from descriptions and opinions a set of pedagogical roles this type of technology can play in education and develop a set of guidelines to increase the possibility of achieving those pedagogical results using the tool.

A. Pedagogical Roles for Online Discussions

The Forum can play a unique role in a given course – a role that complements the educational activities of lecture and hands-on session. Use of the Forum has shown significant advantages in accomplishing the following goals (although many of the activities have been implemented successfully without the use of the Forum).

1. Informal Writing

- a. Students can be required to do weekly writing assignments without overwhelming the instructors with papers to grade. Informal public posting allows students to engage with the material in a way that is different from longer formal writing assignments and from off-the-cuff, in-class discussions. Because their responses are posted publicly, the students tend to respond to online assignments thoughtfully, without requiring the instructor to engage in the time-consuming task of grading.
- b. Electronic discussions help students learn the value of writing drafts, reworking their arguments and backing up their ideas with evidence before turning them into essays. They also learn to use online discussions as a resource for their graded essays.



*Communicating in Cyberspace***2. Student-led Discussion**

a. The Forum provides many students with an opportunity to lead a discussion without affecting the success of in-class discussions. There may not be enough time in a section to teach students how to lead a discussion as well as to cover the course material. On the Forum, students can initiate a topic and work out their own guidelines for discussion. In the absence of time constraints and full agenda of section meetings, the Forum can provide a useful learning ground for leading an intellectual discussion.



b. Network learning enables students to assume much of the responsibility for their learning. Assign students to review and reorganise the material presented thus far so that students view their evolving discussion as a data resource.

**3. Peer Learning**

Some instructors who believe in learner-centred principles of education think their role is that of a guide and that the students should run the section discussions as much as possible. The Forum can facilitate this. It provides students with a space of their own where they can learn from each other. They can share their thinking with each other and comment on each other's ideas. Students appreciate having a window into the thinking processes of their peers. The asynchronous format also allows students to work through difficult texts and concepts more slowly, and to help each other understand the material.

**4. Communication across Sections**

On the Forum, student discussion does not have to be limited to the small portion of the class that attends the same discussion section. Students can post their ideas to the whole class and find a group of students that shares their interests. Some instructors believe that the real benefit of the Forum is the opportunity to find common interests and share knowledge with a wider group of students outside those with which they have already discussed the material in person. Therefore, deciding on subject headings is a critical part of planning before implementation of the Forum. If your goal is to provide a venue for students to pursue in-depth discussion of topics in which they are particularly interested, some instructors advise that the subject headings be organised by topic, not by section leader or section number.

**5. Communication Anytime, Anywhere**

a. The Forum's asynchronous format gives students time to think about their contributions to the discussion and to craft their responses in order to convey their ideas most clearly and convincingly. It also allows instructors to respond to students more thoughtfully than they may be able to "on the fly" in section.



Some instructors have found that activities such as debates and mock trials work better on the Forum than in section. In class, students may have only a few minutes to prepare their presentations. The number of students and the length of the class session limit the amount of time each student has to present. On the Forum, students can take their time and approach the assignments more thoughtfully.

- b. Transforming a traditional debate in their class into a web debate enables students to consult the original sources for arguments used by their opponents, thereby significantly enhancing the quality of their rebuttals and reaction papers.

6. **Alternative Format for Student Participation**

Some students may be shy. Others may have so much to say that they cannot get to it all in one class session. Some non-native English speakers may lack the confidence to participate orally in class. Other students may not be assertive enough to break into a heated discussion, or may feel that they do not have enough time to prepare their thoughts in a fast-paced discussion. On the Forum, all these students have a slower-paced, less time-limited venue to work through and present their ideas.

7. **Insight into Students' Thought Processes for Instructors**

Through reading students' online postings, instructors can monitor students' level of understanding of the material, catch common misconceptions, and gauge student interest in particular topics. This can help faculty and instructors with their class preparations.

8. **Better Preparation for Class**

The Forum can provide an ongoing environment for students to reflect on texts, ask questions, and test out their interpretations and syntheses. Instructors can give directed assignments on the Forum that require students to read particular texts and discuss specific concepts.

B. **Guidelines for Using Online Discussion**

Experienced users of the Forum have found that it can be a valuable addition to a course. To get the most out of it, however, institutions should think carefully about their goals for the Forum and how they will integrate it into the course.

1. **Plan for Forum Use Before the Course Begins**

Instructors must think carefully about how the Forum will be used in the course and what purpose it will serve. The course instructors should all be involved in this planning so that they share a similar perspective on how the students will use the Forum. Plan how the instructors will present the Forum to students, and whether there will be any in-class demonstrations.



Communicating in Cyberspace

Students need to be given specific tasks so as to provide some direction. Telling them to “discuss freely” is not good enough. Instructors need to think about how the Forum complements other course elements.



2. **Schedule Forum Assignments in Relation to Lectures and Sections**

Remember to leave adequate time for students to make postings, respond to others’ comments, and read through the discussion before class. Section leaders need to have adequate time after an assignment is due to read through the students’ responses and plan section accordingly. Incorporate special Forum assignments into the course’s requirements, and make sure these are spread out evenly throughout the quarter. Coordinate the due dates of Forum assignments with those of papers and exams; otherwise, students may neglect the Forum assignment.



3. **Refer to Forum Discussions in Class**

Instructors can relate Forum discussions to other course elements by citing Forum comments in lecture or section. Students appreciate knowing that their postings are read and that someone is responding to their ideas. Keeping up with the Forum can be time-consuming, however, so be sure to set realistic expectations for how many postings you will read and respond to each week. Make these expectations clear to the students.



4. **Provide Students with Assistance in Leading Online Discussions**


To increase students’ level of success as discussion leaders, instructors need to model ways to produce a lively, constructive discussion at the beginning of the term. Instructors can hand out some example questions or printouts of interesting threads from previous Forums. The best questions for initiating ongoing discussions are those that are open-ended enough to allow students to present their personal perspectives, while focussing on students’ interpretations of the texts so as not to stray too far afield.




How to post successfully and get friends to read your posts

- *think of the assignment in terms of a dialogue not a writing exercise. You want to engage in a discussion about the texts and issues of the course*
- *this means: elaborate one single idea and keep your message to one paragraph (150-200 words). Texts longer than 150-200 words are harder to follow on screen. Of course, better-formulated and clear posts attract more attention*
- *before you post: think about the assignment first and take (mental notes) before you read other responses*
- *think of a thesis and how you can support your thesis*
- *then read other posts*
- *respond to one that contradicts, or supports, your own thoughts; one that is lacking evidence or seems to fall short on an aspect that is important to you*
- *in your response, you can also turn your own thoughts into questions, offer your argument (remember, an opinion is not an argument); play the devil's advocate; ask challenging questions*
- *avoid hermetic responses that offer only right and wrong perspectives and ignore other possible answers*
- *if you are the first to post: post with a careful analysis and strong (bold) argument (thesis) and open-ended questions that invite dialogue*
- *it helps for the readers of your post if you include a specific quotation from the message you respond to (xx said:""); this way we know to whom you are referring*
- *choose your title carefully (titles, such as "1. Assignment," are far less compelling than content-related titles)*
- *once you have posted, check back if anybody has responded to you and get the dialogue going*





*Communicating in Cyberspace***5. Summaries of Forum Postings in Section Are Not Necessary**


Bring the online discussion into the class and assign students to facilitate the Forum discussion each week. The emphasis should be on presenting new ideas or moving the Forum discussion forward, rather than recapping what has already been discussed outside of class.

6. Avoid Redundancy of Forum Assignments


The Forum has several unique features that make it well suited to play a particular role in the course. Try to develop Forum assignments that build on these features and that do not reiterate in-class activities or other assignments.

7. Limit Your Expectations for Initial Implementation



Successful integration of technology comes with personal experience. Instructors should not be too ambitious in their expectations for the Forum the first time they use it. They will be better prepared to integrate it into a particular course after experiencing aspects that work and do not work well.

8. Start with a Non-graded First Assignment


Starting the course with a non-credit assignment such as a short biography can be a non-threatening, interesting way to get students on line and help create a feeling of community. These types of initial introductions tend to foster shared knowledge and mutual understanding among web-course participants.

9. Do Not Be Afraid to Make Changes

If the Forum is not being used as expected, the instructor should talk to the students about it and make necessary changes. Schedule a brief review or evaluation several weeks into the term to assess how students are using the Forum, how they feel about it, and how well your expectations are being met.

10. Student Forum Requirements Should Be Ongoing

If told to lead one thread a term without an additional weekly requirement, students do not get anyone but the computer-savvy students replying to their thread. On the other hand, requiring students to post too often may cause resentment and discourage voluntary participation above the minimum required. Short assignments once a week should be an adequate amount to encourage participation.

11. Regularly Browse the Forum and Refer to Postings in Class

Regular reading of the Forum and integration of ideas from the Forum into class discussions shows students that the instructor takes the Forum seriously. When the instructor refers to a Forum posting but does not summarise its content in lecture,

students realise that the Forum is an integral part of the class in which they need to participate, just like lectures and readings. Soon ideas and discussions from section, lecture, and online will blur into one. Besides, students appreciate having their ideas cited.

12. Play a Facilitator Role Online

Participate in the Forum enough to show interest, but let students dominate. It is important pedagogically to try not to adjudicate or contribute a definitive answer. If an instructor inserts long-winded opinions or pointed statements too quickly and forcefully into an electronic conversation, it will stifle student interaction and knowledge building.

Strike a balance between contributing enough so the students know you are present and involved but be unobtrusive. Post things such as: "That reminds me of..." or "Look at this other thread because it's really relevant..."

Netiquette also applies...

An understanding of basic Netiquette goes a long way towards ensuring a positive and supportive learning environment.

Anonymity

While anonymity is often, and justifiably, desired in many Internet communications, maintaining your identity is essential in an online course. Course administrators take care to ensure that information that should remain private is not given in public areas of a course.

If at any time you have concerns about your privacy in an online course, please let your instructor know. Ensure you include your name on all your emails as some messaging systems will not include this and many email addresses do not indicate the name of the sender.

Brevity

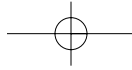
Few people want to read long messages. Other than for special situations, try to keep most of your communications brief and to the point. Others will thank you, and you'll be equally grateful to everyone else.

Communication

Whenever communicating in anger, consider writing what it is you want to say, then save it and reread it the following day before you send it. You may well be glad you waited.

Once sent, a communication is usually impossible to retrieve. It's a terrible feeling to see a comment you regret making posted on a course digital bulletin board or sent in a group email for all to see, with no way of removing or editing it.





Communicating in Cyberspace

Emoticons



Emoticons are simple sideways faces, also known as smileys. A few examples:

:) happy face

:(unhappy face

;) wink, etc.



Countless expressions can be conveyed by emoticons. They can be helpful to clarify a comment where the tone could be ambiguous. For example:



This reading was a challenge :(
really means, *I didn't enjoy it very much.*

However, *This reading was a challenge :)*
really says, *I enjoyed it.*



Use them occasionally where necessary; overuse becomes annoying.

Large files



Avoid sending unnecessarily large files and attachments. Many of those cute screensavers and computer games circulated via email place a heavy load on email systems and make for large downloads, particularly for those who are on slower modems or using older computers. They often may also carry malicious content such as viruses.

Privacy



It is simple to forward a message you have received from someone else. However, unless you have their permission to do so, check first before forwarding it. This is particularly important when you post a private message someone sent to you to a public bulletin board or email list.

Readability

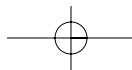


Try to format your messages with lots of breaks and headings. One long paragraph that fills some else's full screen with no breaks will very likely not be read.

Watch for errors: a careful read as well as a spell-check will solve most problems—lots of mistakes are extremely annoying.



If you use Internet chats or instant messaging systems such as ICQ, you're probably familiar with Internet abbreviations: EM4BI IMHO TMI B4N translates as "Excuse me for butting in, in my humble opinion, too much information, bye for now." However, this DWIOLC —(doesn't work in online courses).



Selling

Online courses are not the place to advertise your '85 Fender Telecaster guitar, '95 Honda or anything else. Save commerce for other venues.

Shouting

What is shouting? THIS IS: TYPING A MESSAGE IN CAPITAL LETTERS IS TYPICALLY UNDERSTOOD AS THE EQUIVALENT OF SHOUTING AT SOMEONE. It is perceived as rude, and will usually result in a request by others to "Stop yelling" or worse a "flame"- a flurry of angry responses that will bombard your email inbox.

Tone

When we meet people face to face, we usually have a clear sense of what is appropriate in the way we act and communicate. Meeting people over the Internet similarly requires a certain level of awareness. On the Internet we cannot read body language such as smiles, nods of the head or looks of disapproval, and we can't hear the tone of another person's voice. A quip made with a grin in a face-to-face situation may come across entirely differently in an email message or bulletin board post. Sarcasm, in particular, comes across poorly in Internet communication.

For example: Think of a simple question such as, "Are you serious?" In a friendly situation this could be sincere. In a loud and aggressive tone, it could mean something quite different, perhaps "Have you lost your mind?" When using electronic communications, it may be difficult for others to know what you really intended to convey.

It is wise to communicate carefully particularly at the start of a course. Once you get to know others in your group better, a degree of trust and common understanding may develop. Until then, a brief note of clarification or apology will often resolve an unintended miscommunication and keep things on a positive footing.

Using email

Email is probably the most powerful tool in the online learning toolbox. It enables simple, effective communication among course participants and instructors, exchange of attachments (e.g. word processed assignments), reminders, confirmations, ideas, questions. Many of the communication activities that happen before, during and after an online learning programme are facilitated by the use of email.

If you don't have access to email or a computer of your own, you can still set up your own email account using web-based email. In this arrangement, rather than having your messages originate from or received at one computer, you can go to any computer and log onto a special website such as *Hotmail*, *Yaboo* or *Netscape web mail*. You can do this from anywhere in the world that has Internet access!



Communicating in Cyberspace

It is worth your while getting to know your email system. Most of them have a variety of features that allow you to manage your mail in an efficient manner, including saving and retrieving messages by author, topic, date and other factors. All the rules of Netiquette apply to email as well as other forms of online communication.

**Bulletin Boards**

Bulletin boards, also called “web boards” or “discussion groups”, are web-based communication centres. Typically, an instructor uses them to promote communication among course participants.

In many courses, the bulletin board will be the main “virtual classroom” for the course. The main feature will usually be “threaded” discussions, arranged around topics. For example, clicking on a discussion thread, say “Sentencing Issues”, would open a cascading list of comments, usually begun by the instructor. Other course participants will respond either to the main thread or to comments made by other participant under the thread. The bulletin board will grow as people add comments.

Some instructors will ask you to post assignments to the bulletin board. That means you are requested to attach your assignment (as with email attachments) to a comment you are adding to the bulletin board. If you are unclear as to how to do this, refer to the help functions, or contact your instructor or another student who has already successfully done this.

In some courses your participation in the discussion will be considered an important part of the course and be factored into your assessment.

Tips for using bulletin boards

Some tips for successful use of a bulletin board:

- The bulletin board will usually provide different options for how the discussions are arranged. Take a few minutes to figure out how the particular bulletin board works and find a format that works for you.
- Don't start a new thread if the topic you are addressing is already covered under an existing thread. This helps keep the discussion organised. Go to the existing thread and add your comments there.
- If responding to a specific comment, quote the relevant part of the comment in your response. Most bulletin boards permit you to do this.
- Keep to the assigned topic or course theme. Don't waste other people's time with irrelevant discussions.
- Some bulletin boards will allow you to set up a private discussion with other participant(s) – use this feature if you want to talk among a smaller group either for a group-based assignment or for non-course-related discussion.

- Most bulletin boards have limited text formatting features. If your response is more than three or four sentences, break it into paragraphs; otherwise it will be very difficult to read.
- After you write your comments, use the “preview” feature to see how it reads and looks before sending it in. This is the time to make your final changes, not after your words are in public for all to see.
- Use the principles of good Netiquette.

- **Format and font**

Keep messages free of formatting and use plain text.

- **Develop tolerance for informality**

Messages online tend towards informality. Many people choose to write in their own unique mix of upper and lower case characters, and use more free-form punctuation. You will also notice a lot more spelling mistakes online than offline as people often type their responses quickly.

- **Give clear titles to your postings**

Label your topics clearly to give readers an idea of what to expect. When you post a new message or a reply, check the subject line to ensure it reflects the content of the message.

- **Create single-subject messages whenever possible**

Keep each message about a single topic. This makes it easier to respond to the original topic. If there are several issues raised in one posting, new conversations will start up under the one topic making it harder to dig them out when you need to in the future.

- **Do not hesitate to start a new topic**

If what you want to say does not fit into any of the existing topics, start a new one. If you are responding to an existing topic, but your response engenders a new thread of discussion, start a new topic and point to the new topic in your response to the old one.

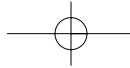
- **Re-read your messages**

Be sure to re-read your messages before you send them, particularly ones dealing with sensitive issues, to make sure the words you have typed are really communicating what you intend to say. Not all boards are set up for the author to edit; it is easier to make changes before the message leaves your computer than to make apologies or give explanations to a larger group after the fact.

- **Use private email when appropriate**

When you would like to have a personal discussion, or if you feel offended by a particular message, send a message only to the individual involved. Avoid anonymity unless it is a feature of the discussion. It's much better to keep the discussion going when you know to whom you are responding.





Communicating in Cyberspace

• **Quote selectively**

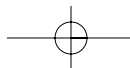
Quoting previously posted text is very helpful when done correctly: Quote only the individual pieces you are responding to, and insert your responses right after the quotes to help everyone follow your logic. Only repeat enough text to help you build on the original point.

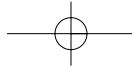
- Check-in frequently – things may develop rapidly on the bulletin board.

Finally...

The rapid advances in technology, the proliferation of Web-based tools at the disposal of learning institutions and the increasing technical skill level of incoming students (especially at higher learning institutions) necessitate an understanding of the pedagogical roles online communication tools can play and how to get the most out of their use. Some salient roles for the tools can be drawn that can help develop students who are active, engaged learners, who feel responsibility for their own learning, and can work collaboratively with their peers to become a community of scholars.

The level of student interest in the subject matter has a great impact on their participation both online and in class. Each class presents a distinct social dynamic and personality that is reflected in the online culture as well.





GENDER ISSUES

Introduction

Although computer networking systems obscure physical characteristics, many women find that gender follows them into the online community. It sets a tone for their public and private interactions to such an extent that some women purposefully choose gender neutral identities, or refrain from expressing their opinions.

The experiences of women online are both personal and political. To a certain extent, their causes are rooted in the physical world – economics and social conditioning contribute to the limited number of women online.

If network policies and legislation are going to determine access to information and participation in public media for this and future generations, they must reflect and address the perspectives of women to avoid further marginalisation.

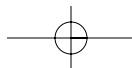
While email is fast becoming common in the workplace, it is still predominantly used by those in technical fields, whether in educational institutions or in business; or by those with technical facility or training. In most countries, however, some progress has been made in making this service available to the public through the introduction of Internet cafes.

Men who use the Internet are likely to be in an academic, management, or technical position that offers free access as one of the prerequisites of their jobs. Thus, a higher percentage of men have both the technical training and subsidised access to participate online than women do.

Additional deterrents to online participation may be attributed to women's roles in society. While more women are in the workplace, they often are still primary caretakers for their children. In most households women bear the brunt of household chores. Women may find they have less free time to learn to navigate online systems.

Although women often use computers in business settings, technical roles – from programming of telecom software to operating communications systems – remain predominantly male. Invitations to sysop gatherings addressed “Dear Sir” and including “your wife is welcome,” customers who ask for a manager when they hear a female voice on a technical help call, and the popular culture archetypes of computer enthusiasts as male are continual reminders of common assumptions based on gender.

A study showed that both men and women who were shown a document rated it higher when the author's name was male than when the author's name was female, even when the same paper was used in both instances. According to an Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) publication, in the professional world such assumptions based on gender translate to pay gaps that continue to increase at higher levels of experience.



Interface



Access to online communications is not simply a function of economics. The technical expertise required to establish access to online systems, and the interfaces users encounter when they get there, can be significant deterrents to online participation for non-technical users. While graphical user interfaces can significantly ameliorate this problem, they are system specific, a situation that can hamper access for small or community organisations and lower income individuals who can only afford older and non-standard equipment, if at all.



Studies have attempted to explain why fewer girls than boys pursue technical fields. Some studies indicate that gender impacts on perception. Network interfaces are typically designed by men; if the studies are correct, it would appear that developing interfaces that rely on women's perceptive skills in addition to men's would impact online participation.



Perceived Usefulness

An even greater deterrent for non-technical users is the perception of usefulness.



Network systems administrators and project managers geared to serving non-technical users find that education is a tremendous part of their work. They must demonstrate concrete benefits to overcome a new user's investment of time and money to learn to telecommunicate. And what are the benefits? Network users often describe virtual community as a benefit of being online; professionals and activists find they can gather, access, and disseminate information and viewpoints not readily available from mass media.



People will say things online that they will not say face to face. In addition, missing elements of conversation, such as facial expression, vocal clues, and other conventions have a complex effect on online interactions.



An element of this technology is a tradition of sometimes colourful diatribes or "flaming". Since women tend to use language differently than men do, these highly aggressive language patterns may be even more of a barrier to women's participation. Styles of communication (sometimes referred to as "debate" and "relate" styles) often complicate messages. While debating and arguing an issue is the normal style for some people, others understand these debates as an attack on them, causing them to pull away from the discussion. Being sensitive to the style of communication can be as important as the actual message being conveyed.

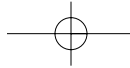


Enhancing Women's Participation: Approaches and Future Direction



System interfaces need to be evaluated in terms of user preferences. Since research indicates that women tend to learn and navigate somewhat differently than men, increased participation of women as software and system interface designers is an important goal.



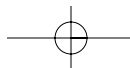
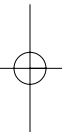
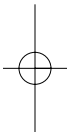


Simpler interfaces are of benefit to all users, but especially to those without technical training. The familiarity of a new interface attracts women users both with and without technical backgrounds who never or rarely used the old one.

Employing women as technical staff, or in informed customer service roles, and encouraging women to volunteer information to one another can help to take some of the challenge out of learning a new set of skills. Special approaches such as women-only tutorials, information campaigns and rate subsidies are tools that may help systems approach a gender balance.

Conclusion

How we address the issue of barriers to wider participation of women has long-ranging impact on other issues, such as harassment versus inclusion and the participation of gays and the disabled. Much is made of the tremendous potential email and conferencing have to revitalise participatory democracy, but intelligent, motivated affirmative action will be needed if gender barriers are to come tumbling down. Affirmative action can take place at the institutional level, and friends can assist at grassroots level.



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GROUP EXERCISE – USING ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Task A

1. Create a folder on the desktop and give the name **Working Folder**.
2. Set up MSN Messenger Service.
3. Sign in.
4. Create a discussion group and add hotmail (or .NET passport) members. (Those with no hotmail or .NET passport accounts to create them.)
5. Acknowledge the existence of your group members online by sending them greetings.
6. Discuss briefly, online, the topic of "Cyberspace Communication".

Task B

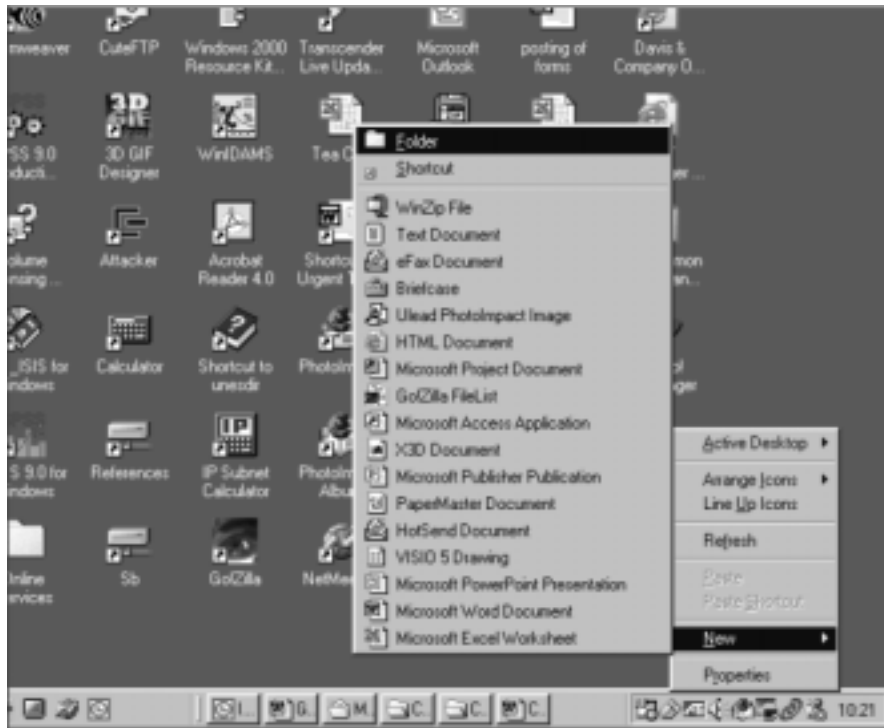
7. Go to the BREDA web site <http://www.dakar.unesco.org/> and save the ADEA logo in your working folder.
8. Go to the NESIS web site <http://nesis.easynet.fr> or <http://www.unesco.org/nesis>
9. Click on the link to the Education Statistical Analysis Workshop (Nairobi Kenya 11-22 February 2002).
10. Download the zipped Cyberspace document to your working folder.
11. Open the downloaded document, using WinZip.
12. Insert the ADEA logo at the top of the first page and save the modified document.
13. Zip the saved modified document.
14. Attach and send the zipped document to your group members who are online
15. Sign out of MSN Messenger Service.



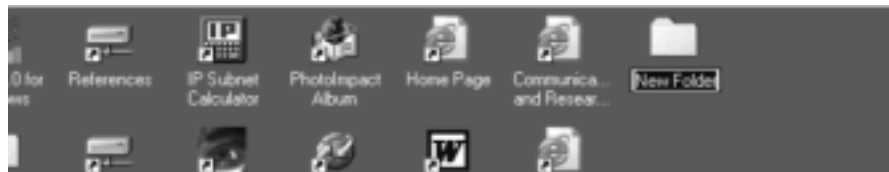
Task A

Creating a folder on the desktop

1. Right-click the mouse on any free portion of your desktop.
2. Move the mouse to the end of "New".
3. Move the mouse to the top of the second window and click on "**F**older".

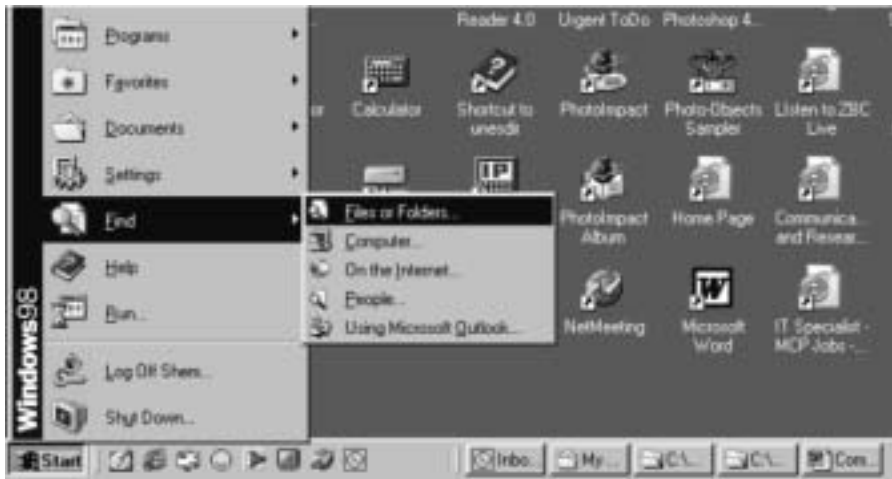


4. Type **Working Folder** to replace the "New Folder" name below the folder icon you have just created on the desktop.

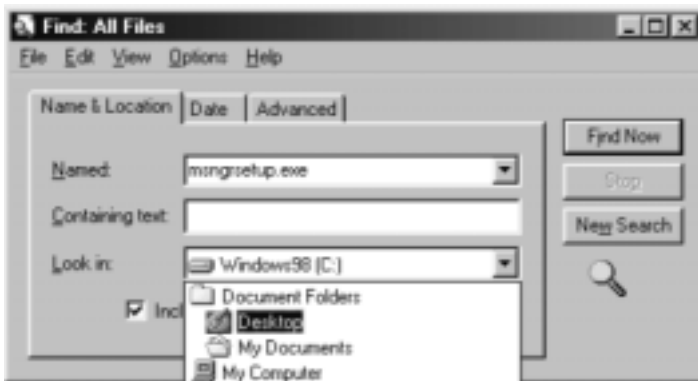


Setting up MSN Messenger Service

- Download the file **msnmsngr.exe** (or an equivalent setup filename) from the NESIS web site <http://nesis.easynet.fr/> and save it on your desktop. Locate the downloaded file **msnmsngr.exe** (or an equivalent setup filename) on your computer: Go to **Start > Find > Click on Files or Folders**



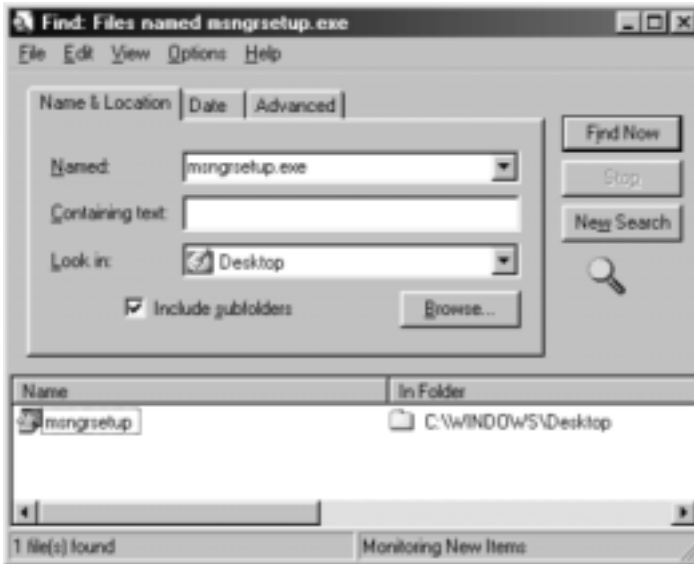
- Type **msnmsngr.exe** (or an equivalent setup filename) in the "Named:" portion of the *Find: All Files* dialogue box. Select **Desktop** under "Look in:"



Click **Find Now**.

Communicating in Cyberspace

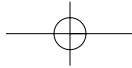
- If the search is successful, the dialogue box below pops up.



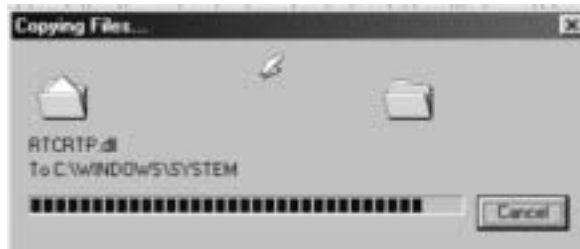
- Double-click on the file **msngrsetup** (or an equivalent setup filename). The first installation dialogue box appears, as shown below.



Click **Yes** to proceed with the installation.



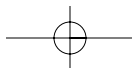
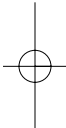
9. The progress of the installation is shown by the two windows below.



10. The dialogue box below will pop-up upon completion of the installation.



Click on **Click here to sign in**



Communicating in Cyberspace

11. You will be presented with the Sign-in window below.



12. Type your **Sign-in name** and **Password**.



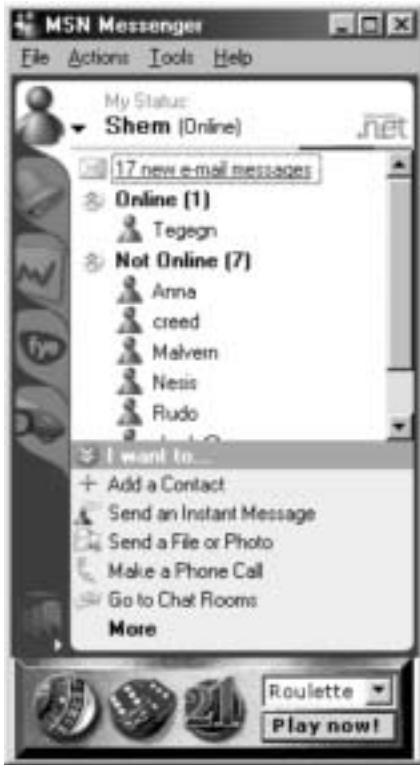
Click **OK**.

13. The window below appears.



Wait for the signing in process to complete.

- 14. When successfully signed in, you will see a window similar to the one below.



* In your case, you will probably have no Contacts online.

Creating a Discussion Group

- 15. Click on more to activate the "Add a Group" portion of the window.

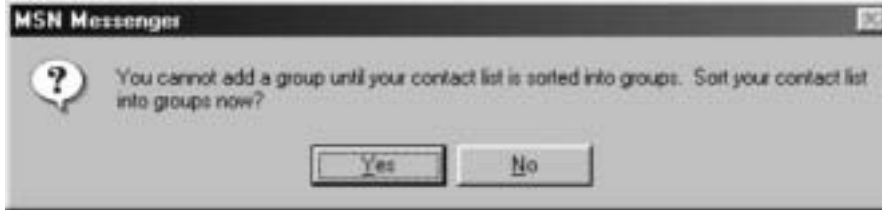


Click + **Add a Group.**



Communicating in Cyberspace

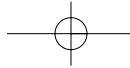
16. The window below prompts you to sort your contact list before adding a group.



Click **Yes** to sort your contact list into groups.

17. Name the new group **TWGx** (where x represents the group number) as shown in the two windows below.





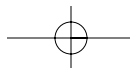
Adding members to TWGx.

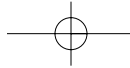
18. Click + **Add a Contact**. The dialogue window below pops up.



Click **Next**.

19. Type a hotmail address of a member of **TWGx** (where x is your group number) then click **Next**.





Communicating in Cyberspace

20. Wait for a few seconds as the address is verified. If it exists and it is correct, you will receive the window below.

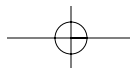


Click **Next**.

21. You are provided with the option to continue adding members or to end the procedure.



Click **Next** to repeat the above procedure for all the members of your group. When done, click **Finish** to end the procedure.



- 22. If the members you added are in a different group, click and drag each to the right group.



Sending acknowledgements to individual group members.

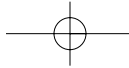
- 23. Double-click on the Name of the participant who is online (not one that is away) or Click on Send an Instant Message, followed by the name of the participant who is online, then click OK.



- 24. Type your acknowledgement message.



Click **Send**.



Communicating in Cyberspace

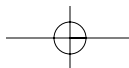
- Wait for a response, and proceed with a discussion on "Cyberspace Communication".

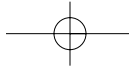


Task B

Sending Attachments Online

- Type the following URL into the address bar of your web browser, and press the Enter key or click GO: <http://www.dakar.unesco.org/>. You will obtain the page below.

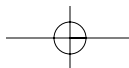




- 27. Scroll down the page to see the ADEA logo.



- 28. Right-click and select "Save Picture As".



Communicating in Cyberspace

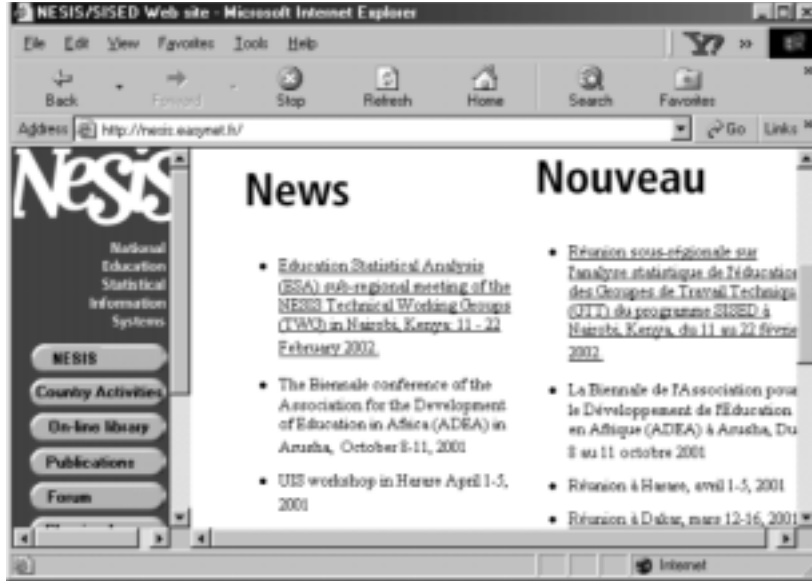
- 29. Save the logo in your **Working Folder** as **adea_fr.gif**.



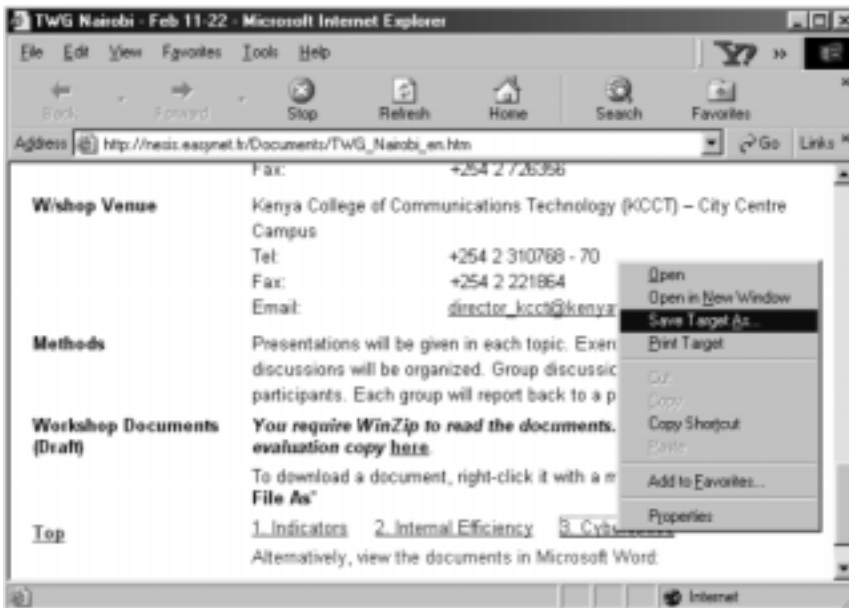
- 30. Type the following URL into the address bar of your web browser to go to the NESIS site: <http://nesis.easynet.fr/> or <http://www.unesco.org/nesis>

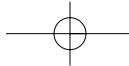


31. Scroll down to the link on Education Statistical Analysis Workshop (Nairobi, Kenya 11-22 February 2002).



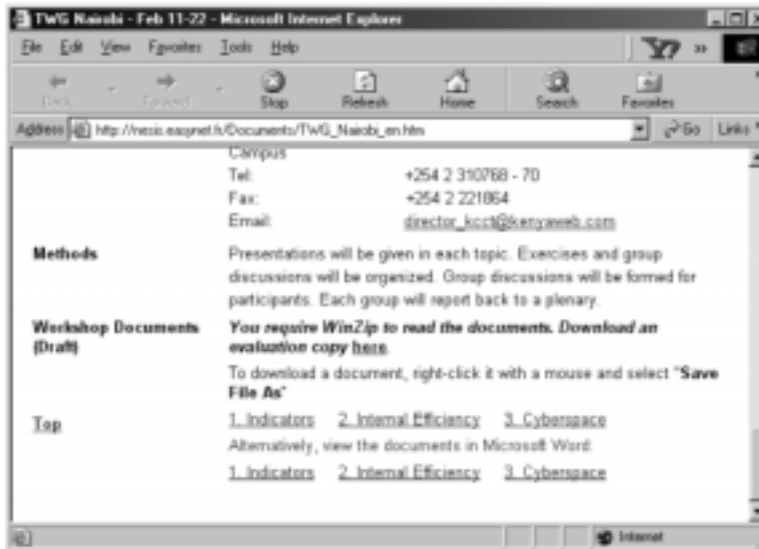
32. Click on this link to obtain a new window shown below:



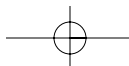
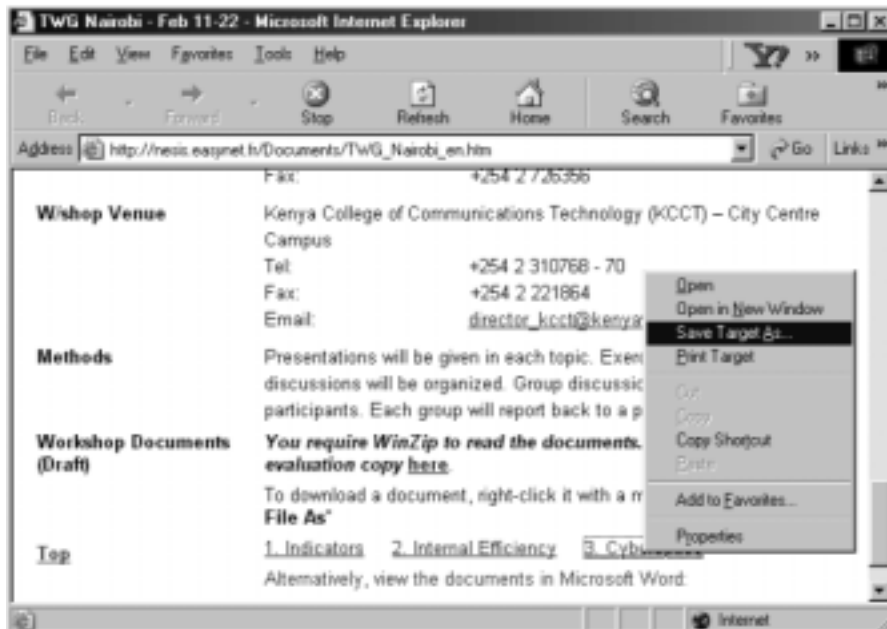


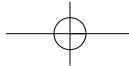
Communicating in Cyberspace

33. Scroll down until you see the zipped document "Cyberspace".

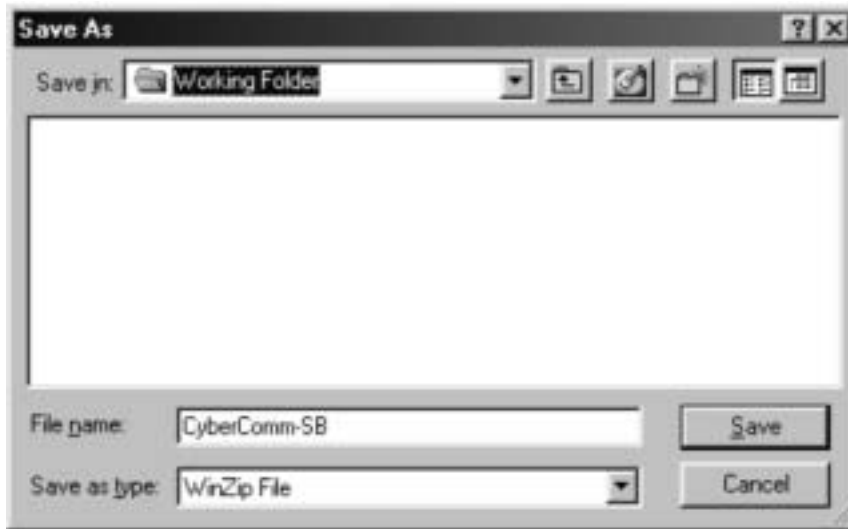


34. Right-click the document link "Cyberspace" and select Save Target As.

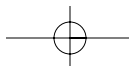




35. Save it in your working folder as **CyberComm-SB**.

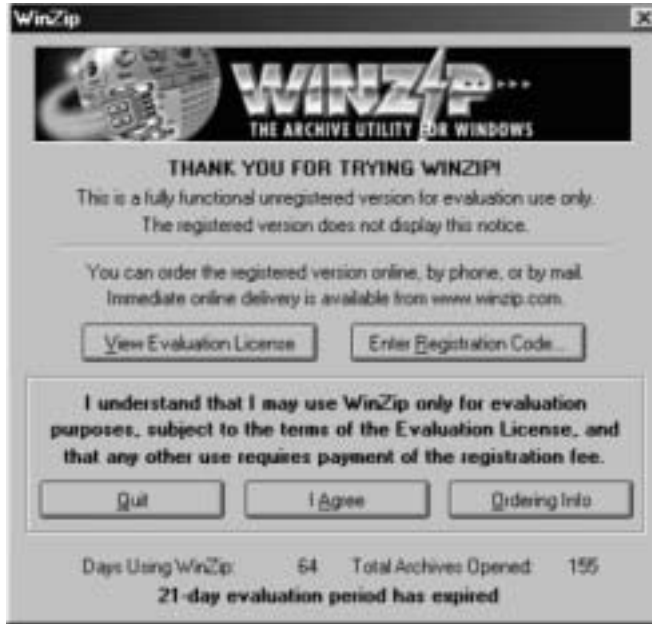


36. On clicking **Save**, the window below will be displayed, showing the progress of the download process.



Communicating in Cyberspace

37. When the download is complete, click **Open** to unzip the file **CyberComm-SB.zip** to obtain the file **Communicating in Cyberspace** (if you do not have WinZip installed on your computer, visit <http://www.winzip.com> to download and install an evaluation copy). You can also begin the unzip process by locating and double-clicking the downloaded file from the **Working Folder**.



Click **I Agree**.

38. The window below appears.



Click **Next** to continue.

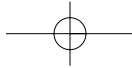


Click **Next** to continue.

39. The path of the selected folder should be for the **Working Folder**.

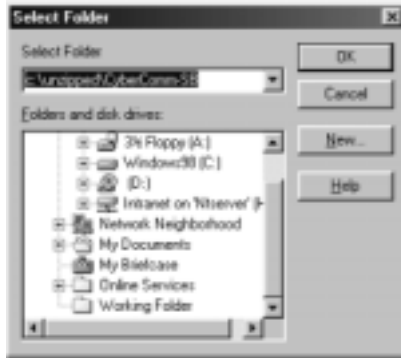


Click the "**Select different folder...**" bar.

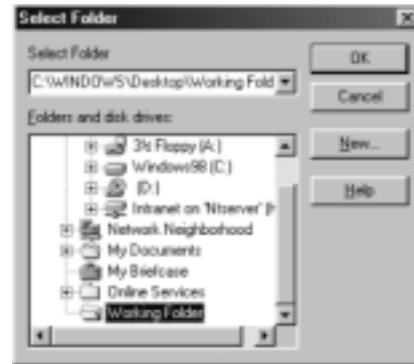


Communicating in Cyberspace

40. The window below gives you the option to set the correct path.



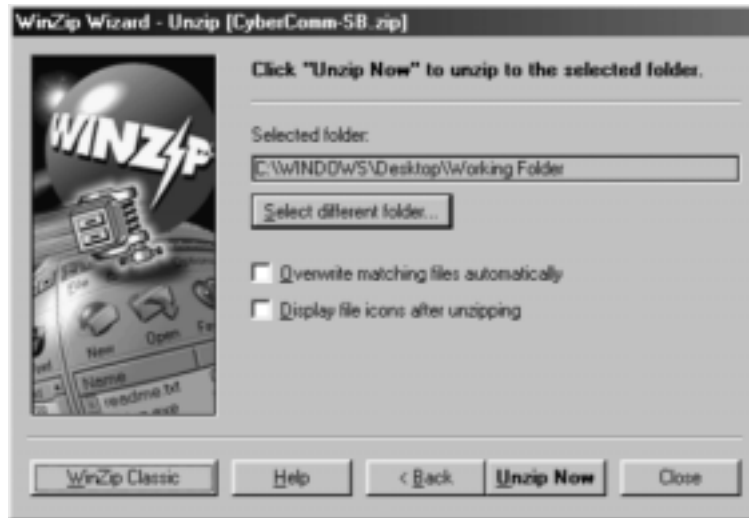
41. Browse to your Working Folder.



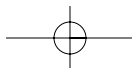
Click **OK**.

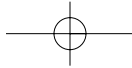


42. The **Selected folder** path should appear as shown below.



Click **Unzip Now**.



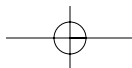
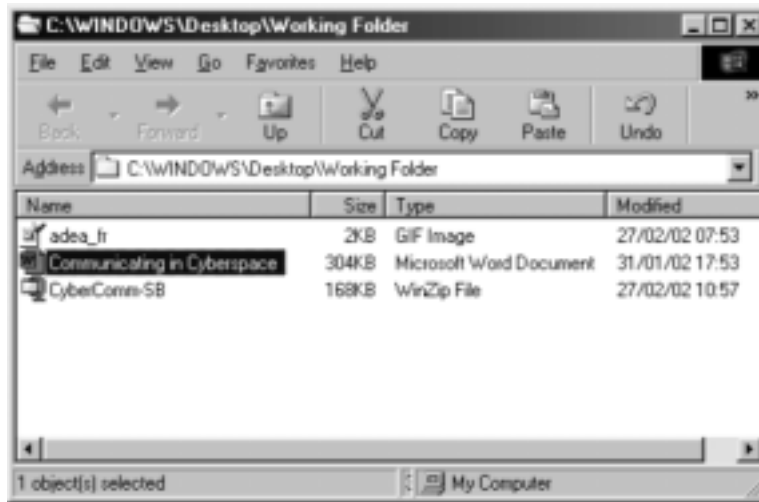


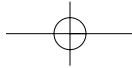
43. When the unzip process is complete, the window below appears.



Click **Close**.

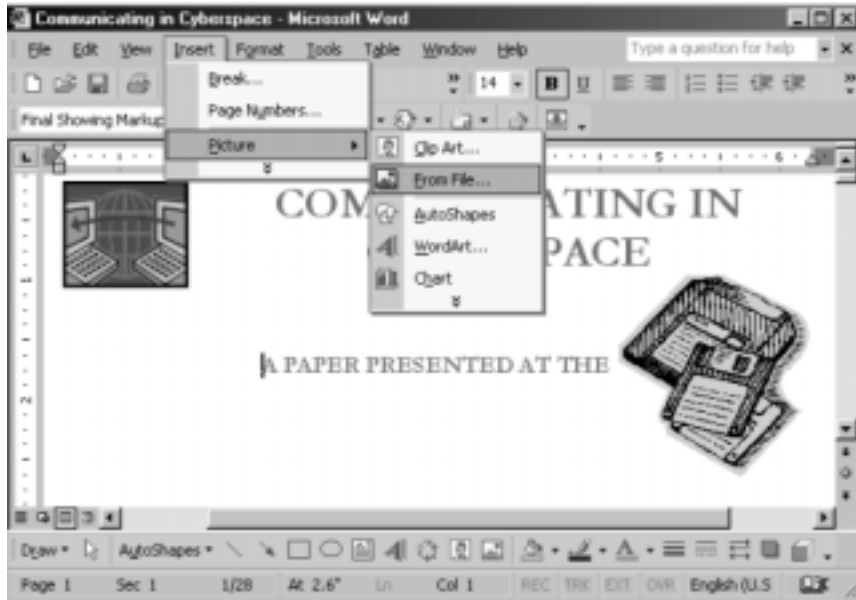
44. Navigate to your working folder and double-click the file **Communicating in Cyberspace** to open.





Communicating in Cyberspace

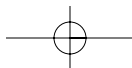
45. Insert the **ADEA Logo** that you earlier saved in your working document: Use **Insert > Picture > From File**.

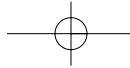


46. Select **adea_fr** from the **Working Folder**.



Click **Insert**.

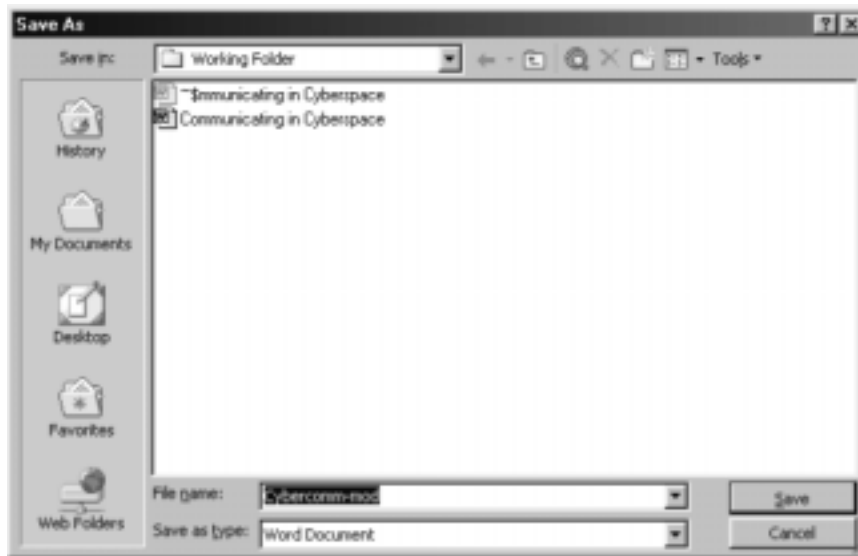




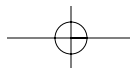
47. The logo now appears as part of your document.

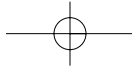


48. Save the modified document as **Cybercomm-mod**.



49. Close **Cybercomm-mod** and exit Microsoft Word.

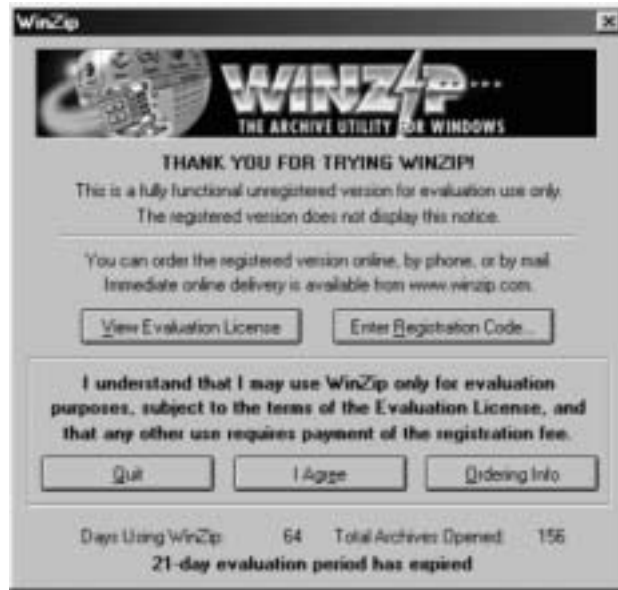
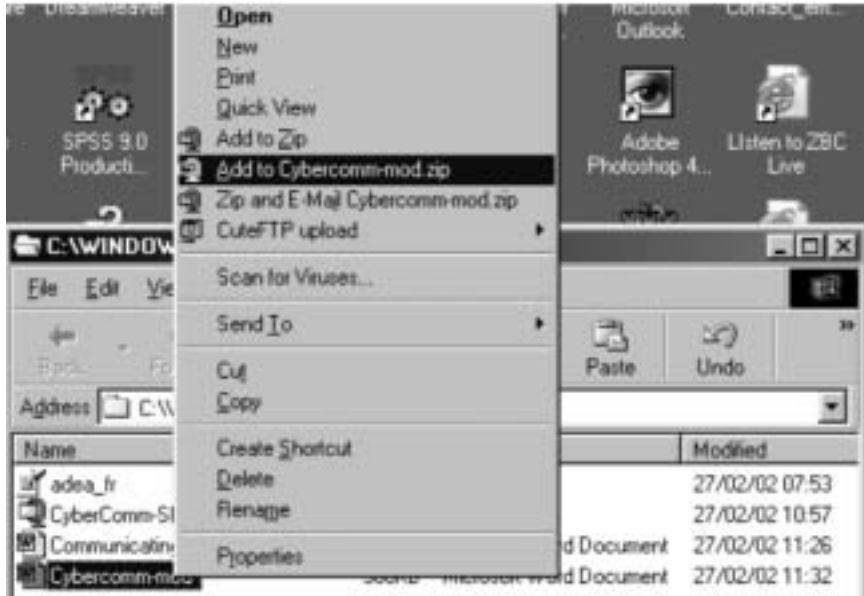




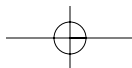
Communicating in Cyberspace

Ziping the Cybercomm-mod document.

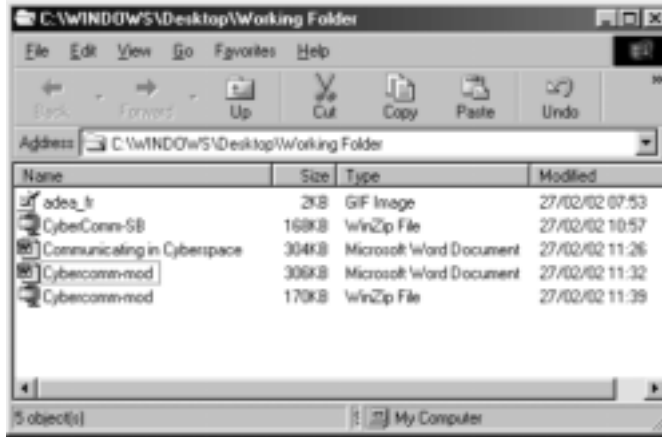
- 50. Navigate to your working folder, right-click on **Cybercomm-mod** to commence the zipping process (select **Add to Cybercomm-mod.zip**).



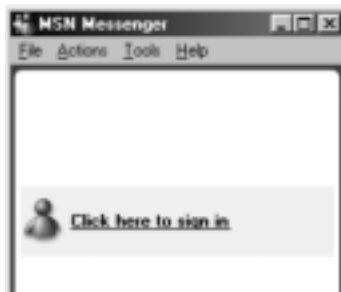
Select **I agree**.



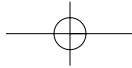
51. After a short time, you will notice that a zipped file with the same name **Cybercomm-mod** has been added to your working folder.



52. Close all windows to remain only with the desktop.
53. Sign in to **MSN Messenger**.



Click **Send a File** or **Photo**.

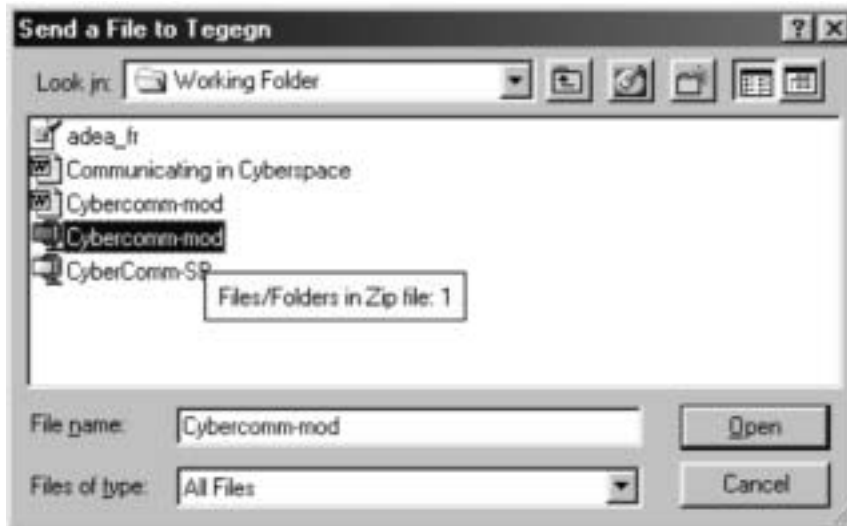


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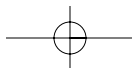
54. Select the person to send the file to (must be online) and click **OK**.

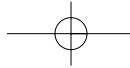


55. The contents of the working folder are automatically displayed.

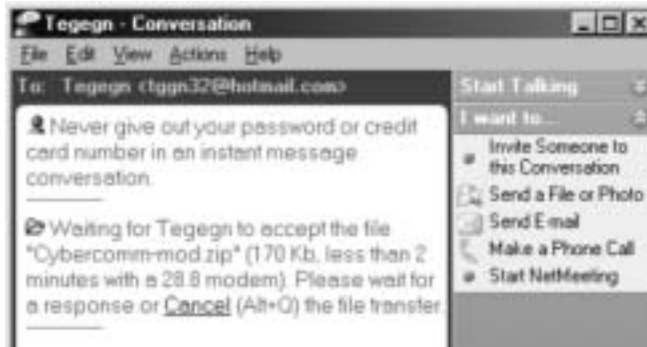


Select the zipped file **Cybercomm-mod** and click **Open**.

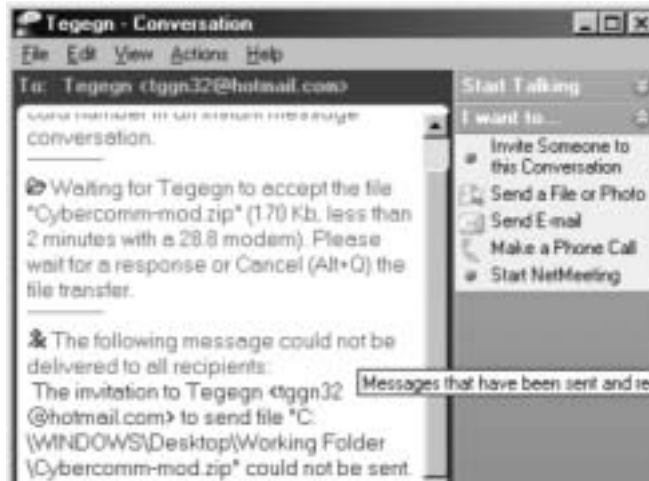




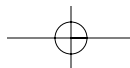
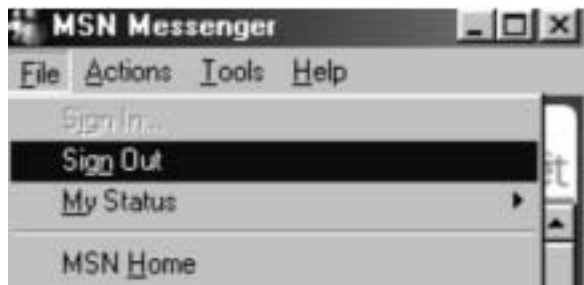
- 56. The window below is displayed.

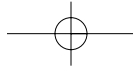


- 57. The zipped file will be sent once the other person accepts to receive it. **However if the other person decline, you get the message below:**



- 58. Sign out of **MSN Messenger**.





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