Online etiquette or 'netiquette' – The dos and don'ts of online communication

HERE ARE 7 TOP TIPS TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ONLINE ETIQUETTE:

1.
BE RESPECTFUL
Everyone has different feelings and opinions and it is important to respect this online. You may wish to comment on something someone has shared but always remember that behind every account is a real person. *If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, the internet is not the place to say it either.*

2.
BE AWARE OF HOW YOUR COMMENTS MIGHT BE READ
Strong language, capital letters, and exclamation marks can be easily misinterpreted online. In the real world we have the addition of body language, tone of voice and facial expressions to help us understand what someone has said. We also have the opportunity to re-phrase what we say if we're misunderstood in the offline world. When you are online, these are missing. *Think; if you were to receive this comment how would you have felt?*

3.
BE CAREFUL WITH HUMOUR AND SARCASM
It's always great to share jokes with others and it is important to be yourself online and let your personality shine through. However, not everything is always clear online and sometimes people might not realise you are joking. Often people rely on emojis or text speak, eg 'lol', to help show they are not being serious, but it isn't guaranteed other people will understand this. *Reread what you have written and think; will everyone get the joke?*

4.
THINK ABOUT WHO CAN SEE WHAT YOU HAVE SHARED
Privacy settings are a simple way to restrict who can see what you are sharing, but even with them in place nothing is ever truly private online. Make sure you keep as much of your personal information off the internet as possible and never share anything inappropriate or that may get you into trouble. *Remember you are only as private as your much public friend.*

5.
REMEMBER TO CHECK FRIEND REQUESTS AND GROUP INVITES BEFORE ACCEPTING THEM
The internet is a great place to share content and chat to friends but remember to review any new requests before accepting them. Check if they are from someone you know or were expecting to receive a request from. *If it isn't from someone you know or recognise then it is ok to decline the request.*

6.
TAKE TIME TO HAVE READ THE RULES OF CONDUCT / COMMUNITY STANDARDS
Most online forums, social networks and gaming networks have their own code of conduct or guidelines for a user's online behaviour. Every user has the right to have the same positive experience online. The services you're using use these guidelines to help guide and support you so that you know what will and won't be tolerated on their service. *Before using a new account take a moment to read the guidelines, so you know the appropriate rules of posting, behaviour and what to do if you need to report something you see on this service.*

7.
BE FORGIVING
The online world can be very different from the offline world so try to be understanding of others when they struggle with online communication. If you see something online that you don't think is appropriate, you can use reporting tools to flag it to the site's safety team. *Remember that not everyone will know these rules before posting or realise that they have upset someone else.*