

D i g i D e s i d e r a t a

Desire for Civility in the Digital Age

Go placidly amid the texts and tweets and remember what peace there may be in unplugging. As far as possible, be on good terms with all persons in the global digital community.

Post your text, pictures, and videos in a way that reflects well on who you are and the passion you bring to your life. Think before you post or send anything in electronic form. Respect the privacy of others.

Read and comment on what others have posted. Be polite, even if you disagree with their perspective. They too have the right to post their opinions.

Avoid aggressive cyberbullies, flammers, and trolls. They are vexations to the digital spirit.

If you compare your profile and number of friends with others, you may mistakenly think you are "hot" or "not." Seek quality, not quantity in your online friending.

Make sure the time you spend online does not interfere with your education, career plans, and personal relationships ~ for a balanced life is essential in this chaotic world.

Exercise caution when reading information on web sites or in messages you receive. The Internet can be a place of trickery, scams, phishers, and those who promote hatred and bias.

But also recognize the wonder of an environment that gives everyone, especially the oppressed, the opportunity to express their own truths. For out of many truths expressed online by people with higher ideals may come higher truths. And everywhere online there are Internet heroes who speak out against harm ~ or file abuse reports.

Be yourself online or, where appropriate, create an avatar. But do not engage in theft, deceit, or abuse ~ or seek to seduce someone to send you a nude sexy image. Always remember, just because you can, doesn't make it right.

Read and follow the Terms of Use for the web sites you use, as these are grounded in the principles that support the well-being of all users on the site.

Realize that when you are online your actions are tracked ~ which allows advertisers to target ads based on your interests. Consume wisely.

Connect safely. Use the privacy protections. Know how to detect when you are at risk, and how to effectively respond if someone sends you hurtful messages, distributes damaging material, or sends overly friendly messages in an effort to exploit you.

But do not fear that you will always be at risk online. The vast majority of people do not wish to cause harm or to see others harmed. Make a commitment to be kind and respectful to others and expect the same in return.

You are a child of the digital age, no less than the texts, messages, blogs, tweets, and clicks. You are a part of the emerging global digital community. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt this digital community is growing as it should.

Therefore be at peace with the electronic energy flow ~ for you are part of the great connecting. And whatever your online activities and aspirations in the multitasking cacophony of bits and bites, keep peace with your essential being.

Despite the immediate global distribution of images of destruction and despair, those who are now more effectively connected can better work to turn the darkness into light.

Embrace digital civility. Strive to be :)

Digital Civility Standards

The DigiDesiderata is a statement of Desire for Civility in the Digital Age. It is grounded in a beautiful work by Max Ehrmann entitled, Desiderata. You can find this online. "Desiderata" is Latin for "desired things." The DigiDesiderata addresses many of the issues related to digital citizenship:

- Keep yourself safe. Understand the risks. Know how to avoid getting into a risky situation, detect when you are at risk, and effectively respond—including knowing when and how to request adult assistance.
- Present a positive image. Present yourself online as a person who makes positive choices.
- Do the right things. Respect the feelings, privacy, rights, and property of others.
- Take responsibility. Help others who are at risk or are being harmed. Encourage civility. Report abuse.

This lesson will encourage you to develop statements of your own personal values and standards for how you will use digital technologies. Create your own statement. Perhaps create a slide show or a poster. Share your standards with your friends. You will likely find that you have many standards that are in common.

Questions

- What do you want your "digital presence" to say about who you are?
- What are your standards for the kinds of text or images you will send to anyone, even just one person, in electronic format?
- When you interact with others online, they could be friends, people you know but not that well, people who your friends know, or complete strangers.
 - What are your standards for who you will allow to have access to your profile information?
 - How will you determine whether people you are interacting with share your values and are safe?
 - What are your standards for how you will treat others online or when texting?
 - How will you respond if someone sends you a hurtful message or you find they have said cruel things about you to others?
 - If you are interacting with someone online with whom you have, or want, a personal relationship, how will you make sure this relationship is good for both of you?
 - What are your standards about sharing information or images about someone else, that could end up hurting that person?
- Anyone can post material online, some of which is accurate and some of which is not. How will you determine the accuracy of the information you find online?
- How will you keep your use of electronic technologies in balance with other activities in your life?
- How will you use the Internet to consume wisely?
- If you see that someone is being harmed online or is at risk in some way, what steps will you take to help that person?
- How will you encourage digital civility?