



Understanding the New Rules of Online Language



The evolution of technology has had a major impact on our daily life. It has improved our ability to communicate instantaneously with the world using a variety of connected devices. As we use these new technological tools to communicate or scan social media sites, it is necessary to focus on the language we are using to speak with each other. This is especially as we find ourselves in front of malicious campaigns and many false news that penetrates our pages on a daily basis. It affects the way we write and our discussions directly and indirectly.



In this report, we focus on the nature of online language, how to define it, develop it, and how not to give the word more than the meaning it holds. Emotions and tensions may occur as a result of sending a word, emojis or

picture at an inappropriate time, or perhaps a misunderstanding may occur on the way to write a comment.

It has become well known that technology is not only restricted to adult users but also to young adults and adolescents. In view of this, there must be standards and controls for the use of language in the younger age group in order not to become a victim of wrong Internet writings, correspondence or practices.

The language is changing

Flashes interviewed Canadian writer Gretchen McCulloch who noted that “If you talk with people through the internet these days and you sometimes run into miscommunications, you should read **BECAUSE INTERNET** to help you understand the different ways that people use to express themselves online.”

BECAUSE INTERNET, McCulloch explained, is a book that grew out of her observation of language use on the internet. “I spend a lot of time on the internet, and I can’t really turn the linguist part of my brain off. I’m always noticing interesting things about language wherever I go. So, it was natural to start writing articles about



Right
Gretchen
McCulloch



internet language at first, and then people just kept sending me more questions. I eventually realized that there was more to say than would fit in just a single article, so I wrote a book!”

On imposing the formal way of communication to the internet or the social media, McCulloch said, “There have always been formal and informal ways of speaking, even though the specific nature of what formal and informal speech looks like is always changing because language is alive, and living things change. What is exciting to me about the internet is that there is so much more of this informal genre being written down. But that doesn’t mean that people will stop writing in formal genres at all -- just that there is more writing as a whole.”

As a linguist, she talks about the potential impact of social media on language development. “On the one hand, social media means that a word can go viral, just like a funny video can go viral, so that’s one way in which the internet can make new words catch on more quickly. But on the other hand, many of the tools that we use to make it easier for us to type do so by predicting words that are already in their word lists, which can



Left:
Raychelle
Cassada
Lohmann

slow down natural linguistic evolution. It will be interesting to see in, say, 100 years, whether that has a net effect of speeding up or slowing down language change.”

And about her future expectations, she said,



“It’s been really exciting for me as a linguist to see the internet in the past few decades go from being almost completely dominated by English to having a broader range of languages represented and supported. I’m looking forward to seeing that trend continue.”

Netiquettes

According to Professor Elizabeth Hartney, there is a need today to realize that the language of the internet and the way to speak are very important in our relationship with others, given the time we spend online. She sees that the rules

of etiquette are just as important in cyberspace as they are in the real world—and the evidence of poor netiquette can stick around to haunt you for much longer. Following basic netiquettes is important to avoid damaging your online and offline relationships.

“We must realize that real people should have priority in our communication, and what we do not say in the face of someone, it is not necessary to say it online, and what we do not show in public places, it should not be shared online,” Hartney cautioned.

On friendships, privacy and posting, she says, “Don’t “friend” then “unfriend” people. Respect people’s privacy. Don’t repost without checking the facts. Check and respond to email promptly and update online information that people depend upon.”

She says it is easy to lose your sense of what is going on around you when you use technology, but direct sharing with others is more important than ever.

“Don’t forget the positive effect you can have by turning off your phone and having a real face-to-face conversation,” she advises.

Tips for teenagers

With teens spending so much time online via social networking sites, emailing, texting, visiting chat rooms, or just surfing the net, it is important that parents review the following Cyber Etiquette tips with their teen, says the author and professor Raychelle Cassada Lohmann in an article published in *Psychology Today*.

“Exercise the golden rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you. If you wouldn’t speak to the person that way face to face, then don’t do it online. Remember everything you post online is public. It doesn’t matter whether or not you delete the message or text. If you’ve published it, it’s traceable. When you post things online, you’re creating a cyber fingerprint. DON’T USE ALL CAPS when you’re emailing or posting something. All CAPS is a form of internet shouting,” she points out.

“Speak kindly. Remember: it may look like a screen in front of you, but there’s another person on the receiving end. Don’t post things when you’re angry. It’s never a good idea to post

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Above:
Elizabeth
Hartney

something when you’re emotional. Take some time to clear your head before you deal with the situation,” she adds.

Regarding their future professional preparation, she points out that it is important to create email addresses in a more formal way.

“Don’t make up silly email addresses. You will use your email address for college applications, job applications, resumes, and scholarship opportunities. Look at your email address; does it set a good impression? If not, reset it.”

She also focused on the importance of selectivity in what is loaded on the computer. Parents ought to always review what is being posted whether it relates to the teenager himself, his friends or his family.

“Don’t talk to strangers. Don’t get into chat rooms and reveal confidential things about yourself. You may feel that you know the person on the other end of your cyber connection, but he/she can be a phony. Don’t give out personal and confidential information online. Never share your full name, home address, phone number, Social Security number, passwords, names of family members, or credit card numbers.”

In terms of security, you find that it is necessary to use different usernames and passwords. It is well known that many teens use the same username and password for all their sites, and this is not a good idea. If someone finds out their security information, they will have access to everything. It is best to set up multiple usernames and passwords for maximum protection.