



Chatting

What is chatting?

"Chatting" on the Internet has become a popular way for people to connect online in a group (a chatroom) to share similar interests. "Chatting" is like talking, except that you type words rather than speak them. Typically, more than one "conversation" goes on simultaneously at a given time or chatroom.

There are two types of chatrooms online - moderated and un-moderated. A chatroom moderator enforces rules about what is acceptable to discuss in a given chat space. Some sites run software in place of human moderators - automatically removing chatters for using inappropriate language or for violating the terms of service. You should read the terms of service (frequently called TOS) carefully before beginning to enter a chatspace online.

Chat Safety Tips

Your Profile - Generally when joining a chat, you are requested to fill out a "profile". This may be a form asking several personal questions, intending to provide that information to other chatters. This can be a good way for people to locate others with similar interests within a chat system. Be careful, however, not to include personally identifying information. Protecting your privacy online is a very important step in securing your identity - online and off! Read [more](#) on protecting your privacy.

What Language are they speaking?

Chatting online takes longer than speaking, and over the years chatters have developed shortcuts to expressing themselves. One shortcut uses [acronyms](#) to replace frequently typed phrases such as "Be Right Back". In this case, a chatter might simply type BRB. Another shortcut uses punctuation and other keyboard keys to express emotions - these are called [emoticons](#). A chatter might type :-O to express shock at something, or ;-)) to wink. When you tilt your head to the left, you are given a clue to the chatter's facial expression or body language that is taken for granted in face-to-face communications, but lacking when using this type of technology.

Net Etiquette

Net Etiquette (or Netiquette) is a standard or code of conduct designed to enhance your Internet experience and generally smooth the path through cyberspace. We've prepared a [guide](#) to basic courtesies observed online to help prevent an embarrassing faux pas.

Additional Resources

CERT: [Using Instant Messaging and Chat Rooms Safely](#)