UR
Universität Regensburg

VIZEPRESIDENT FOR DIGITIZA-TION, NETWORKS AND TRANSFER

Prof. Dr. Susanne Leist
susanne.leist@ur.de

Universitätsstraße 31
D-93053 Regensburg
www.uni-regensburg.de

Netiquette for digital communication

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Netiquette for digital communication

A wide variety of systems are in use at the University of Regensburg (UR), such as the Zoom video conferencing system, the GRIPS learning platform and the ILIAS digital examination system, to bring the university and academic discourse home or to any other location. The use of social media channels also supports communication between lecturers and students regardless of time and place. We are leaving the familiar buildings and rooms of the UR and create a digital space. The digital space is intended to promote learning and exchange and is based on critical, constructive but respectful interaction. This may sound obvious, but experience from previous semesters shows that this is by no means automatic. The design of the digital space should therefore be carried out consciously. Just as in personal encounters, fair and respectful interaction is essential. For this reason, this netiquette is intended to help us think about how we want to learn and interact with each other on the internet. Accordingly, the following recommendations apply equally to lecturers and students.

General recommendations for digital communication

Communicate respectfully and with sensitivity to discrimination

- We value a considerate, respectful and friendly atmosphere. Words, chat contributions, criticism and arguments must always be formulated in an appreciative, polite, objective and constructive manner. Discriminatory or otherwise disparaging or degrading comments will not be tolerated. All forms of cyber-bullying, insults, harassment, stalking/posturing and hate speech must be refrained from.
- Attention must be paid to the authenticity of the contributions made. All posts are written using your own name and no one pretends to be someone else and writes a post in their name. In addition, ambiguity and sarcastic remarks should be avoided, as other users could misunderstand them.
- Comments should always relate to the content of the respective post.

Protect people and their data

- All persons have a right to the protection of their privacy and their personal or personally identifiable data [1] and respect for confidentiality.
- Every person has the right to decide whether images of themselves are made or how they are used. Unlawful processing of personal data without informed and voluntary consent, in particular unlawful publication of personal or confidential data (e.g. e-mail correspondence) and violation of the privacy and self-determination of individuals, must be avoided.
  Publishing and other forms of processing images, screenshots, videos, voice recordings and similar data in the UR's digital spaces and social media channels is not permitted without the consent of the person who owns the copyright (authors, holders of rights of use, persons

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[1] Personal data includes names, addresses, private e-mail addresses, telephone numbers and IP addresses. There is also sensitive data such as health data, religious or ideological beliefs or sexual orientation.

depicted). Word, image and sound quotations of third-party and copyrighted material must be supported by correct information about the references.

UR reserves the right to delete individual posts in the event of violations or to temporarily exclude the respective person from UR's own channels in the event of serious violations. The following posts in particular are considered violations

- Insulting, threatening, pornographic, youth-endangering or inflammatory content
- Content that contains commercial messages or can be classified as spam
- Content that is unlawful, anti-Semitic, misleading, malicious or discriminatory
- Any form of discrimination and defamation of people or groups on the basis of their origin, religious affiliation, nationality, physical condition, sexual identity or gender
- Calls for participation in manifestly inhuman and discriminatory events
- Comments that have been created automatically or by machine (e.g. by bots)

It should also be noted that the comments, opinions and links of users in digital spaces operated on behalf of the UR do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the UR.

Even in the digital space, university study and teaching is only possible in an atmosphere characterized by goodwill, respect, cooperation and appropriate behavior. Other UR documents also describe how this cooperation can succeed. Examples of this include the guidelines for dealing with conflicts and discrimination, the recommendations for lecturers on sexualized violence in digital university teaching, principles for protection against sexual harassment and sexualized violence at the University of Regensburg and principles for protection against anti-Semitism at the University of Regensburg and the house rules of the University of Regensburg

Contact and counseling centers

- If you have experienced discrimination, violence or anti-Semitism in a class or a video conference, you can contact the university anti-discrimination office / contact person for sexual harassment and sexualized violence / contact person against anti-Semitism.

- Women can also contact the Equal Opportunities Officer for Women in Science and the Arts.

- Further and specific points of contact and counseling centers can be found in the guidelines for dealing with conflicts and discrimination at the UR, the principles for protection against sexual harassment and sexualized violence at the University of Regensburg and the principles for protection against anti-Semitism at the University of Regensburg.

Guidelines for video conferences

The use of video conferencing systems such as Zoom enables us to bring the lecture hall home or to any other location. With Zoom, we create a digital space that also allows for synchronous exchange and promotes learning and teaching. The following recommendations for video conferencing apply to both students and lecturers.

Getting startet

1. If you can't use your own laptop, you can contact the RZ and borrow a device if available. Please use the following **link**.

2. When setting up the computer workstation, please remember the following:

   - Test the sound (with or without headphones) and the camera and ensure that the internet connection is as stable as possible, e.g. by temporarily disconnecting other devices from the network after consulting your flatmates.

   - If you are using a camera, test the lighting conditions and make sure that you are clearly visible. For example, a very bright window in the background can make you appear very dark, which can be mitigated by changing the angle of the camera or using other light sources.

   - As far as possible, ensure a quiet, undisturbed working environment and an appropriate background (e.g. by using a virtual background).

3. Pay attention to your outward appearance: Do you look the way you would like to be perceived in this environment?

4. Use the video conferencing service (Zoom) provided by the UR with your RZ account.

5. Familiarize yourself with the functions of the video conferencing system in advance. Even if the video conferencing system such as Zoom is easy to use, it is not advisable to explore the functions of the system during the video conference. Prepare yourself if you are the host of a conference. Practice using it with friends (e.g. how to "mute everyone" to prevent distractors from being heard, share the screen or a window, or transfer the role of the host).

6. Rules of conduct agreed with the participants in regular classes only make sense if they are consistently adhered to by everyone.

7. Plan five minutes for the registration for the video conference so that you arrive on time for the event.

During the video conference

We make sure that we strive to create a safe atmosphere for everyone involved in both the analog and digital space.

8. When using online spaces, we use real names or the name with which we are registered at the UR and, if applicable, indicate how we would like to be addressed (e.g. pronouns).

9. Whoever is speaking wants to see the faces of the others, also to find out how they are reacting to what is being said, whether they are still following or whether additional explanations are

needed. This basically applies to all events and all group sizes, as it is the lack of social contact that we miss most in this medium. Therefore we recommend:

- To enable a communicative and friendly class atmosphere, please switch on the camera. This applies in particular to video conferences with up to 49 participants, i.e. for events with the maximum number of participants that the video conferencing system (e.g. Zoom) can project onto one screen. By using a virtual background, you can prevent other course participants from gaining an insight into your private environment. If you are unable to switch on your camera and you log in via your RZ account, you can add an appropriate image to your Zoom window by selecting a profile picture.

- It is tempting to look at the people on the screen, but you should definitely also look into the camera when you are speaking to make the participants feel that you address them directly.

- Remember that you are visible and avoid behaviours that would disturb the attention of the speakers and listeners.

10. Use the microphone and show of hands (especially for events with more than five participants). We recommend:

- Sign up if you would like to take part in the discussion. You can either use the virtual hand signal in Zoom or your hand. You can also use Zoom's gesture control (from version 5.10.3), which automatically translates defined gestures (e.g. "thumbs up") into corresponding emojis. Follow the rules agreed in the class.

- Only unmute your microphone when you take the floor. This will prevent background noise. When you stop speaking, mute yourself again and, if necessary, cancel your virtual hand signal.

11. Use the chat function. You can simply send questions, comments or messages to all or only to individual participants (personal message). Please note that the messages in the chat can be saved in the log. A separate log will be created for each participant, in which the public messages as well as his/her personal messages (received and sent) are recorded. Avoid messages in the chat that could be distracting or do not relate to the topic.

12. Zoom allows you to share a specific window (e.g. with the relevant document) during the conference. Do not share your screen in general if you do not want personal messages to be visible to all other participants via a pop-up window. Open the relevant documents before the video conference. Also note that Zoom aligns the bandwidth and prioritizes the shared window, which can have a negative impact on the transmission quality of the other users. Therefore, only share your window for as long as necessary. If problems persist, you can limit the refresh rate of your screen sharing in order to save bandwidth.

13. Make sure to read and follow the *general recommendations for digital communication*.

14. Do you want to leave or end the session? Remember that as host, you must hand over the session to another host if you have to leave the session before it's over. Otherwise the session will end abruptly for all participants.

The recording of video conference sessions - as well as the recording of face-to-face events - is prohibited. No audio or visual recordings of persons will be made without their prior, explicit consent. This also includes screenshots of Zoom rooms or recordings of PowerPoint slides. If recordings have been made with consent, they may not be sent to third parties without the consent of the persons depicted. Violation of the right to one's own image constitutes a criminal offense.

Further links to Zoom

- You can find more tips and tricks for using Zoom **here**.

- There is also a lot of important information in the course **„Toolbox: Hilfe für digitale Lehre"** on GRIPS, The website is also used very actively as a platform for exchanging experiences. The **RZ website** also offers additional information here.

Netiquette contacts

- **Prof. Dr. Susanne Leist**
  Vizepresident for digitization, networks and transfer
  E-Mail: **Susanne.Leist@ur.de**

- **Student Spokesperson Council**,
  E-Mail: **asta@ur.de**

Regensburg,01/05/2024

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Netiquette is also based on the recommendations of the following institutes and institutions:
- **Netiquette zur digitalen Kommunikation an der Goethe-Universität Frankfurt**
- **Netiquette und Kommunikationsregeln in digitalen Lehrformaten**
- **Universität Leipzig, Ostasiatische Institut Japanologie**
- **Universität Köln, Englisches Seminar I**
- **University of Rochester**