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A companion website is available at www.studyskillsconnected.com and provides:

- videos showing how to use technologies such as Google Scholar and social media for your studies
- interactive self-evaluations to help you identify how you could use technology more effectively for your academic work

Chapter 1

Studying with new technologies

Learning outcomes

This chapter provides you with opportunities to:

- identify your priorities for using new technologies for study;
- understand how new technologies are used to enhance learning in higher education;
- familiarise yourself with the culture and netiquette of the online learning environment;
- consider your online presence as part of an academic community;
- consider issues of privacy and security when using new technologies for study;
- identify the technical resources you will need for making use of new technologies as a student;
- consider broader skill sets that you will need as a student.

Introduction

If you are already familiar with using new technologies in everyday life, then you should be able to browse quickly through this chapter. If so:

- Identify your priorities (pp. 2–3).
- Start to take note of the ways that the use of these technologies is different within an academic context.
- Consider your online presence as a student, as well as your responsibilities (pp. 6–16).
- Move on to the chapters that interest you the most.

If you are new to some or all of the technologies covered by the book and to communicating online, then this chapter is designed to help you to:

- make more sense of the culture and language of the online environment;
- become part of the online learning community;
- identify a starting point for using these technologies to enhance your study.

Self-evaluation: identify your priorities

Column A ✓ Tick/check if the statement is generally true of you.
Column B Rate on a score of 6–10 the importance of the e-study skill (6 = unimportant; 10 = essential).
Column C Rate on a score of 1–5 how good you are at this now (0 = very weak; 5 = excellent).
Column D Subtract score C from B (B – C). Items with the highest scores in D are likely to be priorities.

e-Study skills statement	A True? (✓)	B Importance scale 6–10	C Ability scale 1–5	D Priority (B–C)	E See page(s)
1 I have a **general understanding** of how I can use technologies to enhance my academic study					4
2 I am confident about studying as part of an **online community**					5
3 I have a good grasp of the **language and culture (netiquette)** of online communication					6–10; 173
4 I am clear about the **equipment** that I will need in order to use these technologies for study					19
5 I am aware of the key **security and privacy** issues when working and communicating online					11–13
6 I am aware of the broader **range of study skills** I will need for successful academic study					21–2
7 I am aware of the basic **level of technical skill** that I need in order to gain from this book					23
8 I understand how **virtual learning environments** (VLE) or learning management systems (LMS) are used in higher education					26–7
9 I am confident that I make the most **effective use of our VLE/LMS** (if provided)					29–33
10 I am confident about **writing good threads for discussion boards** for collaborative study					36–7
11 I can **find and recognise good quality material** on the Internet for **academic** assignments					Chs 3 and 6
12 I know how to receive **automated searches** of Internet material relevant to my programme					52
13 I know how to use **bookmarks** to store material for my academic assignments					52
14 I know how to use **reference management tools** to help write references for assignments					52

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e-Study skills statement	A True? (✓)	B Importance scale 6–10	C Ability scale 1–5	D Priority (B–C)	E See page(s)
15 I **use podcasts** effectively to support my study					Ch. 4
16 I can **create my own podcasts** to support the various requirements of my programme effectively					73–5
17 I know how to **use my own podcasts** effectively to support studying for exams					71
18 I know how to **use other people's blogs** effectively in an academic context					97–9
19 I know how to **use a blog of my own** effectively to enhance different aspects of my study					80–7; 90–6
20 I know how to make **constructive comments** on other people's blogs					88–9
21 I am confident about using **existing wikis** to enhance my studies					Ch. 6
22 I understand how to set up and **contribute to wikis** as part of my academic study					109–17
23 I am clear **when to use, and not to use, wikis** as a source of information for academic work.					106–8
24 I know how to **reference** within my academic work materials accessed via new technologies					16; 70; 138–9
25 I am aware of how I could use **social media** to support my academic study					Ch. 7
26 I am confident that I would know how to make good use of **voting handsets** opportunities					143–4
27 I know what is meant by **lecture capture**					149
28 I am aware of ways that I could use **video conferencing** to support my study					150–3
29 I am aware of the range of ways that a **smartphone** could be used to support my study					156
30 I am aware of the range of ways that a **mobile device** could be used to support my study					154–5; 159
31 I am aware of **apps** that can support my study					157–8
32 I am aware of how I can **combine** technologies to support and enhance my academic studies					161–5

Using new technologies at college or uni

Your use of new technologies in support of your academic work will be a combination of the opportunities you create for yourself, depending on how useful you find such technologies, and what you must use in order to participate as required. The following examples give you a flavour of some potential uses, most of which are covered in more depth within this book.

Your choice

You can choose for yourself to use technologies you enjoy using in order to enhance your study. For example:

- downloaded podcasts as a reminder of lectures;
- your own podcasts, made to help preparing for tests;
- your blogs to support fieldwork;
- social networking to help a student team project.

Assessment

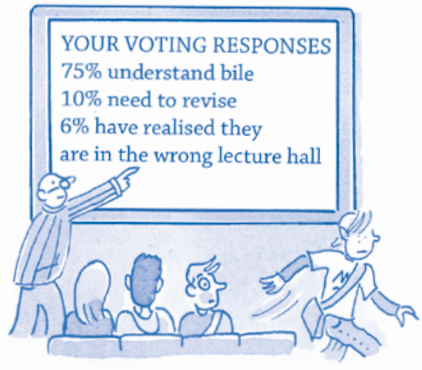
As part of a graded assignment, you may be asked to:

- write an online reflective blog to draw together what you have learnt;
- undertake computer-assessed assignments;
- make a podcast for a particular audience as part of a project.

In the classroom

Lecturers vary in how much they use new technologies within class. Your lecturers might:

- put time aside for you to create wikis on a topic being investigated in class;
- use specialist technologies they are using in their research;
- use voting technologies to show class opinions on an issue being discussed.



Guided independent study

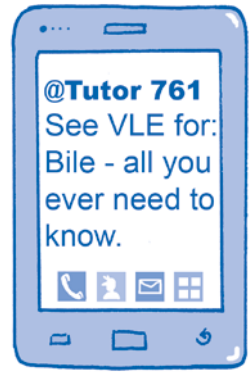
Lecturers may use a virtual learning environment or learning management system to provide a range of resources and learning activities:

- back-up notes for lectures and other taught sessions;
- annotated reading lists or syllabi;
- self-assessment materials for you to test your own understanding;
- interactive materials that you complete online;
- structured support for constructing a student wiki.

As support for learning

Teaching staff may provide additional support via new technologies. For example:

- VLE/LMS materials that explain difficult concepts in more detail than is possible in class;
- podcast summaries to reinforce points made in the lecture;
- messaging to link in with students on placement;
- tweets to reinforce a learning point.



Being part of an online learning community

Online learning communities

You can use social media and a range of online tools in order to make connections with:

- students on your course;
- students whose subjects can inform your understanding of your subject;
- students studying the same subject in other universities and colleges;
- study support groups;
- academic staff teaching your course;
- academic staff worldwide if they choose to use these technologies to communicate their ideas and research;
- those working in your professional area interested in, or contributing to, developments in the theory and knowledge base of your subject.

Your role within the learning community

1. **Enjoy the benefits** of sharing your own and others' knowledge and experiences.
2. **Be an active contributor**: contribute material, links and comments.
3. **Respect others** within that community, abiding by ground rules and using good 'netiquette'.
4. **Act responsibly,** taking care of yourself and others (see pp. 12–13).

Building a social community as a student

As students' social and educational lives are closely interconnected, using tools such as blogs, Facebook® or Twitter® to build a social community can also benefit your learning community. These can help you to:

- make more friends on your course or programme, giving you access to a wider community of students to draw upon for support and to discuss areas of interest to your study;
- find clubs or societies at your college or university and receive their updates. This can help you to feel part of campus life, make connections, and open up opportunities that enhance your studies.

Build a larger community

You build your online community through being an active contributor.

- **Select tools that interest you:** you are then more likely to maintain your use.
- **Use these on a frequent basis:** this helps to develop a set of followers.
- **Contribute** opinions, ideas, information, proposed solutions and your own experiences, so that others feel it worthwhile to check in and engage.
- **Engage in dialogue.** When you post comments and responses on relevant blogs, discussion boards and other sites, this indicates your interest in others, who are then more likely to respond to you.
- **Connect to others.** If you follow groups or organisations on tools such as Twitter, look at their followers, and follow them too. Some automatically follow anyone who follows them, building up larger circles of connections (but some discrimination is called for otherwise you may end up following spammers).

Culture, language and 'netiquette'

The online community is dynamic and so the terminology, jargon and customary ways of behaving undergo constant changes.

- To understand the terminology, see the glossary provided on p. 173.
- The informal, widely accepted code of working and communicating online are referred to as 'netiquette': see pp. 6–9.

Basic netiquette

What is 'netiquette'?

Communicating online has its own conventions and culture, known as 'netiquette' (literally, 'Internet etiquette'). You may be familiar with this already. Much will also apply to academic contexts but some will be different.

As in everyday life, be aware that real people receive your communications and are affected by what you say and do.

- *Be sensitive to your audience and the context.*
- *Adapt your style, content and presentation accordingly.*

Common courtesies online

- Offer friendly opening greetings or welcome, appropriate to the context and recipient.
- Introduce yourself to new recipients.
- Sign off at the end of communications.
- Be polite as in everyday life, using please, thank you, sorry, etc. as appropriate.
- Avoid wasting recipients' time: keep messages brief and clear. Get to the point quickly.
- Don't forward emails or other communications to others without their author's agreement.

Show appreciation

- Say thank you when you have enjoyed or been grateful for a post or comment.
- Make a simple brief comment to indicate that you have read a post.

Good point! Thanks!
Nice one. I agree.
I'm glad I'm not the only one!

Check the message

It is easy to send quick responses without having fully understood someone's message. Re-read posts or comments carefully; you might have misinterpreted them, especially if they:

- seem too good to be true;
- appear unexpectedly rude;
- make you want to send angry responses;
- might have misspelt or omitted a word.

You have won a car! Send £100 to claim your gift.

Behaviours to avoid and discourage

- **Rudeness:** Avoid being rude just because you can't see the reaction: send only what you would say in person.
- **Trolling:** Trolls set out to cause nuisance and annoyance, such as disrupting discussion threads.
- **Inappropriate flaming:** Flames express opinions with strong emotion. Avoid using them simply to be provocative, or in ways that cause offence or spoil the atmosphere of an on-site group.

Netiquette: managing your tone

Read for tone

In face-to-face communications, you can use facial expression and gestures to help convey your message. If your phrasing is confusing or inexact, your body language and tone of voice may fill in the gaps, helping your audience to interpret what you really mean.

Unless you are using a webcam when communicating with lecturers and students, you won't be able to rely on facial expressions, body language and tone of voice. You are more reliant on your phrasing and presentation to convey your tone and the nuances of your message.

Do

- Read everything before you send it, checking whether the recipient could interpret your words in ways you hadn't intended.
- Be wary of using irony, sarcasm, humour, innuendo or mock insults unless you know the recipient will find these acceptable – these are unlikely to be appropriate for most academic communication.
- Be aware that the use of capital letters is viewed as shouting or aggression online.

Consider the difference in impact of the use of capitals below.

I'm tired.	I'M TIRED.
I want a copy of your notes!!!	I WANT A COPY OF YOUR NOTES!!!
Have you seen this?	HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?

Lurk a little

Before launching into a discussion group or chat room online, lurk for while to gain a feel of the site, the content covered and the tone and style used. This will help you to communicate in line with the culture of that site.

Reflection: Tone of communications

In general, what is the main tone of your formal communications (Polite? Chirpy? Cheeky? Friendly? Over-friendly? Complaining? Professional?)

Do you read your emails, messages and other e-communications carefully enough to check for tone, adapting this according to your audience?

Managing emotional content

Messages can come across more strongly than intended when written down and especially if written in brief messages typical of electronic media.

Do

- **Provide explanatory context**
  Provide a brief background and context in order to help recipients interpret your messages in the way you intend.
- **Check for alternative readings**
  Re-read your emails or postings before sending them; check whether the recipient might gain a different impression than you intended. Would the message read differently if read with stress on particular words or with a different intonation?
- **Pause for sensitive communications**
  If you have difficult messages to convey, or are angry or depressed when writing, leave messages for at least an hour without sending. Read these when you feel calmer or in a more positive state of mind, so that you are in a better place to decide whether you should amend the communication before sending.

Netiquette in academic and work contexts

Reasonable expectations

- Be realistic in how often, and how quickly, you expect others to respond to you.
- Don't expect lecturers or other students to respond to you on a daily basis.
- Don't keep sending repeat emails, messages or tweets simply to get a response. Look for other means of gaining the answers you need.
- Don't waste other students' time by copying them in unnecessarily or sending endless trivia.
- Assume that those outside of your circle of family and friends will take much longer to get back to you – and may not do so at all.

First impressions

Much online communication is rough and ready. There is a widespread belief that conventions such as spelling, grammar, punctuation and general care about the technicalities of writing don't matter in emails and online. That is generally the case for friends and family and on many websites or networks.

However, there are situations where good presentation does count. Be aware that your emails and other messages may be used by employers, lecturers and others to make judgements about your personality and the levels of care, commitment, respect and attention you would bring to a job or research project. As in everyday life, aim to make a good first impression.

Avoid

- Don't send rushed, garbled messages.
- Don't send messages with typos and omitted words, that don't make sense.
- Don't use emoticons in academic work and other, more formal, e-messages.

Do

- Use the resources available to help other students. Share ideas and helpful links.
- Ask questions that stimulate genuine intellectual curiosity.
- Proofread for clarity of meaning.
- Read your message through the eyes of the eventual recipients.
- Use a different approach to emails and other communications for work, academic staff and administrative staff than you would for friends and family.
- Write in a friendly, polite but semi-formal style to those in positions of authority and people you do not know.
- Assume that anyone you contact about a job or work experience will be looking at how you present yourself in all of your communications, including your use of grammar, punctuation and tone.

Reflection: Creating impressions

Read through a sample of the messages you sent over the last few weeks to different people.

- How well did you proofread these?
- What impression of you do these messages convey?
- Have could you adapt your communication for people other than friends and family?

Self-evaluation: netiquette

Rate yourself on the following 20 netiquette items, using a scale where 5 represents always using good netiquette for that item and 0 is never doing so. Circle the score that best applies to you.

Netiquette item	Personal rating ☺					☹
1 I take care to remember the feelings of the recipients of my online communications	5	4	3	2	1	0
2 I take care of the feelings of others potentially affected by what I write or do online	5	4	3	2	1	0
3 I re-read my messages before sending them, to check that they convey the right message and tone	5	4	3	2	1	0
4 I checked to see whether my college or uni provides its own guidelines for online communication – and adhere to these, if so	5	4	3	2	1	0
5 I adapt the content and tone of my communications to suit different kinds of recipients	5	4	3	2	1	0
6 I am always polite in my online communications, even when I don't like or approve of the other people involved	5	4	3	2	1	0
7 I take care what I send over the Internet so that nothing I say or do could come back to haunt me in future years	5	4	3	2	1	0
8 I avoid trolling	5	4	3	2	1	0
9 I avoid sending flames that might upset or unnecessarily provoke other people	5	4	3	2	1	0
10 I am realistic in my expectations when I ask for information or responses	5	4	3	2	1	0
11 I use the subject line in communications to make it clear to recipients what they are about to open and whether it is urgent or not	5	4	3	2	1	0
12 I say 'thank you' when people take the trouble to send me information, links or support	5	4	3	2	1	0
13 I post helpful comments where appropriate	5	4	3	2	1	0
14 I avoid dominating discussions and message boards with my own issues and points of view	5	4	3	2	1	0
15 I take care not to waste other people's time by sending them unnecessary messages and trivia	5	4	3	2	1	0
16 I check that my emails and posts are reasonably easy to read, adding in words that I may have omitted and correcting punctuation	5	4	3	2	1	0
17 I ask for permission before forwarding communications sent to me by others	5	4	3	2	1	0
18 I respect other people's privacy, taking care not to copy their private information or photographs to others	5	4	3	2	1	0
19 I take care not to jeopardise other people's security through careless use of information online	5	4	3	2	1	0
20 I respect copyright and avoid piracy, paying for legal downloads as required	5	4	3	2	1	0

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Your netiquette and ground rules

Self-evaluation: interpreting your score (see p. 9)

Find your percentage score

Add all your scores to find your total. As this is a score out of 100, this is your percentage score.

Interpret your score

Over 80%

If you rated yourself at over 80%, and assuming your judgement is accurate, then you have very good netiquette and people are more likely to want to communicate with you online. Note the pattern of your weaker scores and identify what you could do to improve on these.

Under 40%

If you scored below 40%, it is quite likely that:

- you may be causing offence to others;
- and/or creating unnecessary stress for yourself and those with whom you are communicating;
- and/or you run the risk of other people not wanting to communicate with you or not giving you what you need;
- and/or you run the risk of being barred from chat rooms or other sites.

If you generally consider yourself to have good online communication skills, this is a score to be concerned about. You would be well advised to reflect on your low scores and devise a quick action plan for improvement.

Between 40% and 80%

The closer you are to 80%, the better your netiquette and the more likely you are to receive good communications from others. The closer you are to 40%, the more you need to take care of how you are communicating online. Note the pattern of your weaker scores and identify what you could do to improve on these.

Top priorities for improving netiquette

Identify your lowest scores. Select three items for immediate improvement.

Priorities for improving my netiquette	
1	
2	
3	

Set your own ground rules

As a student, you will be involved in activities where you communicate and share information online. Formulate a clear view on what you find acceptable for yourself – as ground rules for yourself and for groups that you are in.

Ground rules	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Your online presence

Give thought to the amount and kind of information available about you online. Once information is released online, it is very difficult to stop it circulating, even many years or decades later when you may feel very differently about it.

Allowing public access … to you

If you allow public access to your profile, blog or communications, it is wise to adhere to the following ground rules so as to keep yourself safe and protect your future interests.

- **Be aware of what you send into the unknown.** Keep in mind that if you allow public access to your profile, blog or other online material, you will not know who may see them or use them. Your words or images may be found through search engines and used for a range of purposes that you had not intended.
- **Consider your image.** Consider whether images and words posted in a rash moment might come back to haunt you later, when you might want to convey a different kind of message about yourself.
- **Remember the permanent record**. Bear in mind before posting them that comments in the public arena could be accessed and recycled for many years.
- **Aim to avoid offence.** Think carefully whether your comments could cause unintended offence to other students. As well as being hurtful to others, such comments could be used to make judgements about whether you are a suitable candidate for a job, society, prize or public office. In some cases, you could be sued for damages or prosecuted for breaking the law.

What would a future employer see?

It is not uncommon for employers to research prospective candidates online at some stage in the appointment process. Communications that are intended to amuse friends and colleagues might not remain private. Before sending them, consider whether photos, blogs, postings and other online information about yourself would convey the messages that you would wish to be seen by prospective employers. If you wanted to impress employers or others in future, would the information available on you via Google or other search engines help your cause?

Multiple accounts

If you use Twitter for academic, personal and professional purposes, you could consider setting up multiple Twitter accounts. On a mobile device, you can easily switch between these accounts. The advantage is that your professional 'followers' do not then see the more informal information that you might wish to send to friends and family.

Activity: Employer awareness

What kind of a picture would a prospective employer build up of you from googling you now?

Protect yourself and others

Take care when advertising events

There have been serious cases of house parties advertised on open access sites, resulting in large numbers of uninvited guests and a great deal of damage.

Protect against identity theft

If someone is intent on stealing identities, they may be skilled at assembling and cross-referencing snippets of information from your different communications in order to build up your personal profile.

Draw up a list of the information that could be gathered about you from across the range of your electronic communications and from search tools such as Google. Include such details as:

- where you are studying, what and why;
- your timetable and travel arrangements;
- your likes and dislikes;
- details of teaching staff;
- names and details of friends and family;
- recent purchases, holidays and patterns of spending money;
- when you, your friends or family are away on holiday;
- whether you or someone you know is moving house, when and where;
- places you go out to frequently;
- where you usually get your lunch;
- local events or sights;
- views from your window;
- whether you are feeling vulnerable in any way, and why;
- employment details.

Activity: How much do you reveal?

What kind of picture could a relative stranger build up of you and your life from the information available about you online?

- What kind of lifestyle does it suggest?
- What might it suggest about when your home, or that of someone you are writing about, is most likely to be empty?

Protect the identity of others

Chance details that you and others make public can be pieced together to build a profile by identity thieves.

Activity: Can you be trusted?

How much information could a third party find out about your family and acquaintances just by putting together information on them that you have made public?

Be considerate of third parties

Be responsible in how you refer to the words, activities or ideas of other people, even if meant only as a joke. Your comments or photos may be passed on to others or used in ways you hadn't intended. Be careful that you do not cause someone else trouble or harm by what you write, such as through jeopardising their security, privacy, job prospects, relationships, ideas, studies, or general peace of mind.

Show courtesy to staff

It is not good netiquette to complain about college or university staff in ways that identify individuals.

Students have received disciplinary action for comments made about staff on Facebook. There are legitimate, formal mechanisms for providing feedback to your university or college about your experience as a student and for making complaints, if needed.

Taking care of your privacy and security

Your personal security and privacy strategy

How good is your strategy for taking care of yourself online? Evaluate each statement, circling a rating of:

5 for 'always'
4 for 'nearly always
3 for 'most of the time'
2 for 'sometimes'
1 for 'hardly ever'
0 for 'never'

Statement	Always . . . . . never
1 I devise long passwords that include letters, numbers and symbols	5 4 3 2 1 0
2 I change my passwords frequently	5 4 3 2 1 0
3 I gain permission before sharing other people's information with third parties	5 4 3 2 1 0
4 I use privacy settings (see p. 87 in Ch. 5)	5 4 3 2 1 0
5 I adapt my personal settings according to the message I send	5 4 3 2 1 0
6 I use up-to-date anti-virus software	5 4 3 2 1 0
7 I am cautious about sharing personal details with people I know only online	5 4 3 2 1 0
8 If I meet someone I know only from online, I take someone else with me	5 4 3 2 1 0
9 I refuse to share passwords and PINs with close friends and colleagues	5 4 3 2 1 0
10 I never send money to help out friends known only from online communications	5 4 3 2 1 0
11 I would never disclose my password, PIN or similar details to anyone who requested these online or over the phone – even if they sound 'official'	5 4 3 2 1 0
12 I avoid sharing my assignment material before the hand-in date	5 4 3 2 1 0
13 I keep my home address private from people I know only online	5 4 3 2 1 0
14 I keep my landline phone number private from those I know only online	5 4 3 2 1 0
15 I keep family details private from those I know only online	5 4 3 2 1 0
16 I take great care of which photographs I send to others	5 4 3 2 1 0
17 I allow my full profile on social networking sites to be seen only by those I have nominated as friends	5 4 3 2 1 0
18 I avoid making any response to messages I identify as spam	5 4 3 2 1 0
19 I delete spam messages permanently	5 4 3 2 1 0
20 I protect my academic work online, so that nobody but me sees it before everyone's work is graded and returned	5 4 3 2 1 0
Total (add up your scores for the 20 items)	%

Find your percentage score

Add all your scores to find the total. As this is a score out of 100, this is your percentage score. See p. 14 to interpret your score.

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Evaluate your score (from p. 13)

In general, the higher your score, the more secure and protected you are. However, anything less than a 100% score leaves you open to unscrupulous use by others.

Err on the side of caution, even if this makes you feel unnecessarily distrustful at times. Loss of control over your information can have serious unforeseen consequences.

There are all too many people worldwide skilled at deceiving even cynical Internet users into believing a false story. Some develop a strategy of building a plausible story and relationship over several years, using convincing false identities, in order to extort money or other benefits once trust has been established.

7 'Nevers'

1. **Never** … assume you know someone purely from online contact.
2. **Never**… share passwords.
3. **Never** … share your PINs.
4. **Never** … meet strangers alone, however well you think you might know them from your online contact.
5. **Never** … send money to individuals you know only through online contact.
6. **Never** … hand in as your own, assignments or parts of assignments that you find or purchase electronically.
7. **Never** … make your own academic assignments available electronically to other students until well after the hand-in date. If other people copy or draw closely on your work, you may be penalised as well.

Sharing personal reflections

It can be useful to share your reflective log with a lecturer or a trusted friend, provided that it doesn't contain personal information. You can ask them to comment on your posts to offer their insights or opinions on your reflection, which may help you to gain a different perspective. However, given the nature of this type of blog you probably wouldn't want to share it too widely.

- **Protect personal information**
- **Protect the information of others**
- **Protect the privacy of yourself and others**

Respect for others' online material

Consent and permissions

Forwarding communications

In general, do not forward email or other communications without the consent of the sender and any others who may be mentioned. Check carefully whom they do – or do not – wish to receive forwarded copies of their communications.

Use of photographs

If you want to send photographs that include anyone other than yourself, always ask their consent before doing so.

Use of audio and video

Audio and video of your lecturers is owned and copyrighted by them and the institution. You should not share, alter or re-post podcasts or videos provided by your lecturers without permission.

Information gained for student projects

If you interview anyone for a project or gain information from them in a survey, they must be made aware, in advance, how you will use it and must give permission for you to do so. Do not use it for other purposes.

Confidentiality

If you are making use of information gained as part of a student or work-based project, always protect the identity of those concerned, unless they give you express written permission to reveal who they are.

Avoid providing details that could, inadvertently, reveal the identity of those mentioned in your communications.

Protect others' ideas

Students and others sometimes develop ideas on their websites or in blogs which they then wish to take forward as business ideas or inventions. Treat other people's ideas with care. Avoid passing them on to others without their permission, in case third parties make use of these to their own benefit instead.

Stay legal

Avoid illegal downloading.

If you want to download material that you find online, do so legally, paying for it if it is not provided as free or 'open source'.

Copyright infringement and plagiarism

Don't pass off as your own the work produced by other people, whether for commercial reasons or for academic use. This applies to any aspect of their work, whether the ideas, their actual words, their photographs, plans, music, drawings or designs.

The work produced by others is regarded as their intellectual property. Just as you wouldn't expect to steal other kinds of property without legal consequences and penalties, you are expected to respect intellectual property or be prepared for the consequences.

If you make money from other people's work, or are found in breach of copyright, you can be sued.

Make correct attributions

If you do refer to material online as a source of information, always say clearly when and where you saw that material online. This is not only fair to the person who first put the information there, it also helps to protect you legally. There have been cases where students have been legally threatened for comments made online.

Plagiarism and cheating

If you draw upon other people's material for academic work, whether or not you have their permission, you have to attribute this to them clearly within your work. There are formal conventions that surround this. In brief, these are that each time you mention ideas or information taken from another source, such as a web page or online journal article, you must:

- **Cite your source**: state the names of the authors and the date of their work.
- **Write out a full reference** at the end of the work or in a footnote, depending on the convention used on your course.

Details of how to do this for different kinds of electronic material are provided in the relevant chapters below. For example, see p. 70 for referencing a podcast and p. 97 for referencing a blog.

The conventions used by your college or university will be available from them. If you do not use these correctly, you will gain low grades and may be found guilty of plagiarism.

How serious is plagiarism?

Universities and colleges take plagiarism very seriously and use software and other methods to check work once submitted in order to identify where students have copied from each other or from material available on the Internet or elsewhere.

Usually, a first offence of plagiarism means you have to redo the work for a low grade. A second offence may mean leaving without any qualification.

The benefit to you of referencing

For academic work it is good to have used many reputable sources, so it is in your interest to state every time that you draw on these, using the system of referencing recommended by your programme.

The various sections of this book give guidance on how and when it would be appropriate to use material accessed via new technologies and how to cite and reference these in your work correctly so that you avoid plagiarism.

Cheating

You are always at risk of low grades, at best, or being caught cheating, at worst, if you use material produced by other students or online essay banks. Detection tools can usually identify where students have borrowed from such materials and made amendments to make it look like their own work.

If you use work by another student, it is likely that they may be penalised as well as you. For the same reason, you shouldn't let others see your work, even in draft, as:

- it may be difficult later to prove that you didn't agree for your work to be copied;
- it may not be clear to your lecturers who has copied from whom.

Using any material other than reputable sources is best avoided. Your lecturers will not be impressed if you use sections from essays or reports purchased online or borrowed from friends, even if these are referenced correctly.

Do not use services which provide student assignments or proofreading.

Using new technologies as a student

Different lecturer approaches

There isn't a standard set of technologies that you will find on every programme. Institutions and individual lecturers vary in their levels of interest and comfort in using these. You may find that your own lecturers are keen to encourage you to use all kinds of interactive learning technologies, from using your phone or a tablet during a taught session to writing blogs and wikis to support group work or class projects. They may provide many opportunities to use voting handsets, collaborative tools and online resources. If you enjoy that, and feel comfortable using these, then you can have a fantastic learning experience.

On the other hand, you may find your lecturers have some of the following reservations. If so, it is good to be aware of these and to consider how you will adapt your own interest in technologies to suit the culture of the course.

Distractions

The use of phones, tablets, chat rooms and other collaborative tools in class can make for a dynamic, exciting learning experience. On the other hand, these can distract from other aspects of the taught session, so that valuable learning opportunities are lost to the user and, sometimes, to those around them. If this sounds like you, then give some thought to when and how you use personal technologies.

Wikis and Wikipedia

Many lecturers are uneasy about students becoming over-reliant on Wikipedia as a resource. Too many students use this as their sole means of searching for material. As a result, they do not develop the search skills that they will need as they move to higher levels of study. Very often, students use Wikipedia and other online sources in an uncritical manner, relying on sources that are inaccurate. Chapter 6 looks at when and how it is appropriate to use this as a resource. However, it is worth being aware of the sensitivities that surround its use.

Concentration and focus

While it is possible to use technologies and online information in an attentive and sustained way, it is more typical to use these in a butterfly manner, landing briefly and flitting to the next bright object. This way of working and thinking can sometimes help creative thinking. You can cover a great deal of information very rapidly in such a way, exposing your mind to many different stimuli with the possibility that this will generate lots of interesting ideas.

However, some students do not balance this way of working with other methods that encourage perseverance and the application necessary to work complex academic problems through from start to finish. That can have a negative effect on their ability to apply themselves to academic work. If this sounds like you, then this is something to work on so that you develop the ability to sustain focus when needed.

Intended learning outcomes

Lecturers will use technologies selectively according to the material they are teaching and what they expect you to learn. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate not to use technology at all to support learning. In other situations, a lecturer may have decided to use one particular technology to help you develop a skill or gain understanding.

> ***You should look to develop a critical understanding of which technologies are most useful in which learning situations. This book should help you to develop this skill.***

Using new technologies as a student (continued)

'Students know this all already'

Although students can be skilled at using some technologies, especially social media and mobile devices, this is far from universally the case.

In addition, when students are asked about which technologies they use and for what, it is clear that:

- many use a relatively narrow range of the functions available to them;
- very few use technologies that they enjoy using for social life in any kind of sustained and advanced way for their studies;
- when they do use technologies that they are familiar with from other contexts, they are not at all clear about how these should be used within an academic context.

Different student approaches

While some students are extremely proficient in the use of IT, this is not the case for everyone. This is worth bearing mind if you are on a programme that encourages the use of IT or if you are keen to encourage others to use IT for group assignments or for student support groups.

Students' approaches may differ for all kinds of good reasons, such as:

- whether they have had easy access to a range of technologies in the past;
- whether they can access and afford some of the high-end technologies that they see other people using;
- their current levels of technical skills;
- whether they have a known or hidden disability that makes it difficult to use certain technologies;
- whether they want to use social media for their studies, or whether they want to keep these for their personal life;
- whether they enjoy using popular technologies: some people love social media and the constant flow of information; others find this banal or oppressive;
- whether they enjoy using technology at all.

What equipment would I need?

Before you can use the technologies, you may wish to clarify what kind of equipment is needed. The following pages provide a template for identifying what is needed for your programme. Look on your institution and programme websites for information about what you will need. If there is a choice about whether you purchase these, check the full costs in detail, including phone and connection charges across the year. Weigh up the relative benefits against the costs. You may also find it helpful to use the evaluation sheets on pp. 19–20.

Which academic skills?

This book assumes that you will already have a good grounding in study skills appropriate for higher level study. These cover such things as honing your skills in time management, group work, writing academic assignments, and critical and analytical thinking. In particular, they focus more on identifying, selecting and using materials that you find online or elsewhere.

If you are new to academic study, then you may find it helpful to complete the checklist on p. 22.

Which IT skills?

If you are interested in using the technologies covered by this book and especially in combining them in multiple ways, you will need a certain level of computer literacy. If you are unsure about whether your IT skills are at the right level, see the self-evaluation sheet on p. 23.

What equipment do I need?

Read each of the following statements and consider whether it is true of you or not. If you answer No, consider what action you will take and jot this down.

Statement	Yes /No	Action I will take
1 I know the kind of computer and other hardware that I will need for my programme		
2 I have access to these		
3 I know the software that I will need for my programme of study		
4 I have access to this		
5 I have checked whether I will be using Flash-based presentations and material		
6 I know whether I am able to run Flash-based materials on my own hardware		
7 I am aware of the Internet connections I will need (such as Broadband to play video files)		
8 I have access to the Internet connections I will need		
9 I am aware of the anti-virus software I need for equipment of my own that I will be using		
10 I have access to this		
11 My computer hardware allows me to listen to sound		
12 I have headphones so that I can listen to sound in computer clusters or public areas		
13 The software on my computer is up to date so that I can view multimedia content		
14 I am aware of what equipment I can use for free through my university, college or workplace		

The following page provides you with a resource for drawing together these requirements, identifying what is provided and what you will need to provide for yourself.

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Identifying resource requirements

Read carefully through your programme handbooks and websites and other advance material sent to you about your course so as to identify the requirements. Use the Requirements column to note what is needed. Use the following two columns to clarify what the institution can provide and what you can (or wish to) provide for yourself.

Hardware		
Requirements	**Provided by the institution**	**I will need to provide myself**

Software		
Requirements	**Provided by the institution**	**I will need to provide myself**

Connectivity		
Requirements	**Provided by the institution**	**I will need to provide myself**

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Developing the right academic skills

What study skills are covered by this book?

This book is intended as a supplement to standard study skills texts rather than an alternative to them. It starts with the technologies and offers guidance on their use in an academic context. Depending on the specific technology, you will receive guidance with strategies and skills such as those indicated below.

Study skills and new technologies

- **Applying technologies in an academic context:** understanding how to make use of tools such as podcasts, blogs, wikis and social media in the context of academic study.
- **Your online presence**: managing this and your communications as appropriate to membership of the academic community and with your future interests in mind.
- **Gaining from online communications:** using technologies to keep yourself up to date with developments in your subject and career interests.
- **Criticality:** selecting electronic information that is suitable for higher-level academic work.
- **Referencing:** knowing how to reference electronic resources within your academic work.
- **Time management:** managing the time you spend online in research, study and networking.
- **Information management:** managing the information that you find, read, note, store and wish to use for your academic study.
- **Collaboration:** working in a supportive way with other students when using these technologies.

What other skills are needed?

The study skills covered here form only part of the broader set of academic skills required to achieve well in higher education. By contrast, standard study skills books start with the various tasks that students need to engage in and academic skills they need to acquire, such as:

- managing their time;
- developing their critical thinking;
- completing a written assignment;
- or preparing for an exam.

They offer guidance on the strategies and approaches that help students to manage their studies.

Do I need to develop other study skills?

You may feel that your academic skills are already strong, especially if you are doing well at college or university. However, you may benefit from a more through consideration of your academic skills:

- if you are new to higher education: the skills required are different at every level of study;
- if you are transferring from a foundation degree programme to a top-up degree;
- if you feel that there is more that you could do to improve your grades;
- if there are particular areas of your study skills that you feel need attention;
- if, whatever your grades, you think that you could study more efficiently or effectively.

The following page provides a checklist of the key study skills required in higher education. The skills needed will vary to some extent depending on your programme. If those skills are combined with a good use of new technologies, you will be in a strong position to achieve well as a student.

Identifying your academic skills needs

Which study skills do I need to develop?

Thinking skills

- [ ] Skills of analysis and synthesis
- [ ] Critical evaluation skills
- [ ] Critical reflection
- [ ] Memory skills
- [ ] Creative thinking
- [ ] Problem solving

General academic skills

- [ ] Reading effectively for academic purposes
- [ ] Making use of lectures, seminars and tutorials
- [ ] Selecting appropriate information
- [ ] Making and using notes effectively
- [ ] Designing a research project
- [ ] Conducting a literature search
- [ ] Evaluating the literature
- [ ] Formulating and testing research hypotheses
- [ ] Drawing up and presenting your results
- [ ] Understanding plagiarism
- [ ] Referencing your sources appropriately

Writing skills

- [ ] Critical analytical writing
- [ ] Critical reflective writing
- [ ] Applying different academic writing styles
- [ ] Writing for different audiences
- [ ] Writing essays, reports and case studies
- [ ] Writing a research project or dissertation

Managing projects and tasks

- [ ] Planning and managing a project
- [ ] Managing time and resources

Collaborative working and people skills

- [ ] Contributing to seminars and groups
- [ ] Team working and group projects
- [ ] Receiving criticism and feedback from others
- [ ] Offering constructive feedback and criticism
- [ ] Taking a lead
- [ ] Providing support to others

Managing other assessed assignments

- [ ] Oral, poster and group presentations
- [ ] Preparing for, and taking, exams

Managing personal performance

- [ ] Setting personal goals and priorities
- [ ] Keeping yourself motivated
- [ ] Using lecturers' feedback effectively
- [ ] Managing your independent study
- [ ] Developing good study habits
- [ ] Creating the conditions for you to succeed
- [ ] Evaluating your own performance
- [ ] Planning your career and personal success

Study skills: finding out more

As a starting point, the reader is referred to books by Stella Cottrell, all published by Palgrave Macmillan, which cover the above skills and more:

The Study Skills Handbook (3rd edn, 2008) for generic academic skills
Skills for Success (2nd edn, 2010) for life planning and employability
Critical Thinking Skills (2nd edn, 2011)
The Exam Skills Handbook (2nd edn 2012).

See also www.skills4study.com.

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Basic IT skills

Which IT skills do I need?

Computer hardware

- [ ] Access the Internet from a computer or mobile device
- [ ] Resolve problems with access to the Internet
- [ ] Plug in and/or configure a microphone on a computer
- [ ] Plug in and/or configure a webcam on a computer
- [ ] Plug in and/or configure speakers on a computer
- [ ] Use a microphone, video camera and speakers on a mobile device

Software skills

- [ ] Install and configure new software on a PC or mobile device
- [ ] Install software updates as necessary on a PC or mobile device
- [ ] Locate and navigate the institution's virtual learning environment or learning management system
- [ ] Create username and profiles for secure online sites
- [ ] Identify an online discussion board
- [ ] Use a word processor to create documents
- [ ] Format documents using icons or special characters
- [ ] Select and copy text from a word processor
- [ ] Create and use an email account
- [ ] Create and use spreadsheets
- [ ] Create and use presentations
- [ ] Save documents on a PC or mobile device

Online searching skills

- [ ] Locate the college's or university's library catalogue
- [ ] Click links in websites and identify new pages/tabs opened
- [ ] Perform basic searches using online search engines
- [ ] Navigate to websites by typing in a URL or clicking a link

Using multimedia resources

- [ ] Use a media player for listening to audio on a computer
- [ ] Play video files on the Internet

Using devices

- [ ] Access Internet services on a mobile device
- [ ] Synchronise a mobile device with your PC or online services
- [ ] Navigate a mobile device effectively

IT skills: finding out more

As a starting point, the reader is referred to Palgrave Macmillan's online resource skills4study. This resource contains a dedicated section on basic IT skills: www.palgrave.com/skills4study/studyskills/personal/it.asp

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Summary

This chapter has addressed many of the generic issues that apply when using new technologies as a student. These need to be taken into consideration when using each of the chapters that follow. Many of these issues, such as good netiquette, awareness of your online presence and protection of yourself and others when online, will stand you in good stead as a student, in the workplace and more generally in life. Adhering to these should protect your interests and keep you within the law. They should also make it more likely that others will want to communicate with you and offer you the information or support that you request.

If you already make frequent use of new technologies, you may be familiar with many of the issues covered in this chapter, at least in general terms. If so, bear in mind that there will be subtle differences when using technologies for academic purposes and within online learning communities. In particular, your online presence will be considered differently by lecturers, employers and others than it would have been for communications when you were at school or in informal social settings.

In this chapter you identified your own priorities for developing skills relevant to using new technologies and improving your netiquette. It is now up to you to follow through on the areas that you selected. There was an opportunity for you to formulate your own ground rules for communicating and sharing information online. If you completed that activity, display those ground rules somewhere you will see them. Draw upon them when you set up study groups, discussion boards, blogs or make use of other online tools.

There was also a chance to consider the broader set of academic and IT skills that you will need as a student. Such skills are essential to academic achievement. If you have developed a good foundation in academic skills and combine those with creative use of new technologies, you will be in a very strong position for gaining maximum enjoyment, flexibility and success from your studies.

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