

'Netlage': A New Way to Communicate

Any new manifestation of culture, if it is important, causes debate

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We human beings are gregarious creatures. If we look around as we go about our day we will see people sending text messages, talking on their cell phones, talking with each other and perhaps talking to themselves.

Communication is our thing. We talk to animals and we talk to plants. Each day virtually all of us use the Internet to communicate with other people. Our cyber communication has become an important part of our daily lives.

Communication is fun. Communication is power. As the Internet and cell phones have entered society, new variations on our languages have also emerged from emailing, chatting, texting and blogging. This new expression of language I call "Netlage," which is the combination of Internet and Language.

The cyber language, or geek speak, is simply an abridged language, or code, for rapid communication purposes: Korean is Netguel, English is Netlish, Japanese is Netppon and Chinese is Netchin. I arrived at some of these names by consulting my students, who are actively engaged not only in communication, but in complex cyber games.

Also, Netlage includes new terms that have helped us to understand the cyber realm. Terms such as digital footprint, ladder by-pass and hacktivist are examples. The digital footprint has even allowed police to track the nocturnal behavior of politicians.

Alterations, additions and deletions in language occur simply because languages are dynamic, and change according to current thinking in society and new technologies. In the case of Netlage, language has changed according to social pressure as society adjusts to new technology.

Naturally, any new manifestation of culture, if it is important, causes debate. Acceptance of a new addition to culture depends on how valuable or disruptive it promises to be. Netlage is causing such cultural debate. People are evaluating the usefulness of Netlage and whether it is devaluing a country's national language(s).

They are concerned about the loss of the finer aspects of language as people rush into global-technological society. Conversely, nearly everyone, especially students, see the advantages of using Netlage as a way to communicate through fewer key strokes.

Another important concern is over the enormous amount of time people spend interacting with a computer screen rather than learning to interact with other people. In a global world, we cannot afford to lose our sense of how to interact with others.

Some Examples of 'Netlage'

^5	is	High	Five
A3	is	Anyplace, Anytime, Anywhere	
J/K	is	Just	Kidding
CD9	is	Code 9 or Parents are around	
:)	;))	:(faces
^_^	is a cute face		

In fact, we will find that we will have to refine our interpersonal skills to a greater degree in order to engage the world in a sophisticated way. Further, the addition of emoticons has shown that we are not satisfied with the dryness of letter symbols on a screen.

We want to communicate to our friends how we feel. There are many different expressions from which we choose, all designed to convey our mood and message to other people who cannot see or hear us. Truly it is better to see the smile of a friend, in person. Undoubtedly, students will continue to mold and shape their cyber world and Netlage will expand in the larger culture.

The Web site [Net Lingo](#) caters to the cyber community for the purpose of rapid communication and cyberculture. As a professor, I see no serious problems with Netlage, as long as we continue to treasure, and practice, our writing forms and expressions.

Let us simply remember that staying connected with the real world of people is the way to friendship. And, by staying connected to the real world of nature, we honor all of life. As we enjoy communication with each other, we will continue to observe and participate in the ever evolving culture around us. Perhaps we might make an addition to Netlage. At the same time, let us not accept symbol over substance, data over poetry.

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