

October, 2009

Promoting 'Netiquette' in the Classroom

In today's college classroom, it seems that more students have laptops than don't. In many lecture halls, professors see several of their students typing away all class long. But some professors have to wonder: how many of them are taking notes, and how many of them are checking Facebook.

To help professors keep students concentrated on class work, several colleges have offered guidelines and suggestions for curbing misuse of computers in class and setting "netiquette" standards, like turning off the computer's volume before class begins. Other college guides give tips on ways professors can use technology better in their class, as long as they [comply with copyright laws](#).

The University of Wisconsin [suggests](#) professors implement a "no laptop time" when "laptop users must close their lids." An online guide also says professors may want to create a policy in the event a student breaks the established laptop rules.

In past years, several law schools have [banned all laptop use in class](#) in an effort to guarantee students aren't surfing the Internet during lectures.

Northern Michigan University's guide, ["Suggestions for Addressing Computer Use in the Classroom,"](#) lists sample policies either limiting or prohibiting computer use that can be printed in a professor's syllabus, and offers philosophical rationales for imposing the rules. "Laptop misuse is today's version of having a 'dirty' magazine hidden in the pages of the textbook," the guide says. "It is the student's responsibility to use the laptops responsibly."

The University of Dayton's [guide](#) doesn't dwell as much on student misuse of laptops during class time, but it offers ways professors can use computers to enhance learning strategies. —
Marc Beja