Web 2.0 Dos and Don'ts

Web 2.0 applications are increasingly ubiquitous and easy to use. But they're also just as easy to misuse, so it's imperative that teachers, students and parents alike understand and practice good behavior when using these applications. Here are some DOs and DON'Ts:

DO

Create slideshows or videos from your pictures for class projects, and share them online on sites like Flickr and YouTube.

DON'T

Plagiarize the work of other people. When you use a photo, video clip or anything you've found online for a project, make sure you give credit where it's due.

DO

Turn an oral presentation into a podcast. Enhance your own speaking voice with illustrative sounds and effects.

DON'T

Post offensive, hurtful or inaccurate content. You want to inform, not insult. As a current TV ad campaign asks, *"If you wouldn't say it out loud, why would you say it online?"*

DO

Take pictures on your cell phone of highlights from sporting events, class trips or other school-sponsored activities, and share them on blogs or school sites. Before you go snapping pictures, check your policy about phones on school property.

DON'T

Distribute risqué, inappropriate or irrelevant content. Share only the photos that will be of interest to the widest audience.

DO

Utilize the speed and simplicity of sites like Wikipedia. Not only can you get access to a seemingly endless wealth of information and links, you can even contribute your expertise to existing entries.

DON'T

Believe everything you read online. Because sites like Wikipedia can be edited by anyone, they can also be corrupted with false information and biased opinion. Only trust verified sources and quotes; the best entries will back up their info with facts.

DO

Express your individuality with your MySpace or Facebook page.

DON'T

Post anything about yourself you'd be ashamed of in a few years. If you can find a hilarious picture of yourself via Google, MySpace or Facebook, a potential employer or college recruiter will be able to find it too, and might not find it so hilarious.

DO

Collaborate with classmates on online projects. You might even be able to take advantage of opportunities to interact with students in other schools, states or countries.

DON'T

Disrespect others' contributions or comments. Be civil in your online conversations. Even if you don't agree, try to be honest without being cruel.

DO

Increase awareness about a social issue that matters to you, whether you're passionate about school politics or world hunger. Share your opinions with an interactive website or message board that gets your message out.

DON'T

Use the Internet as a platform for personal vendettas against classmates, teachers or family members. And don't resort to insults in your comments, even if someone insults you first.

Sources and sites:
"The Web 2.0 Classroom", Victoria A. Davis, Westwood Schools http://k12online.wm.edu/Web20classroom.pdf
"Survey shows barriers to Web 2.0 in schools," by Meris Stansbury, eSchool News, April 16, 2009. http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/top-news/index.cfm?i=58264

Web 2.0 Dos and Don'ts

DO

Protect your work — and your life — with privacy filters, encryption and other security measures to keep anyone else from accessing your personal information or altering your content.

DON'T

Let anyone have your password, not even your closest friends. If you want people to contribute, let them use a comments section. And if someone posts something you think is inappropriate on your own website, delete it.

DO

Give voice to your thoughts and dreams. Sites like Blogger and LiveJournal are great for posting your own poetry, short stories or deep thoughts.

Sources and sites:
"The Web 2.0 Classroom", Victoria A. Davis, Westwood Schools http://k12online.wm.edu/Web20classroom.pdf
"Survey shows barriers to Web 2.0 in schools," by Meris Stansbury, eSchool News, April 16, 2009. http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/top-news/index.cfm?i=58264