

Acceptable Use of Electronic Information Resources

Caltech provides electronic information resources (including, but not limited to, computers, computer accounts and services, networks, software, electronic mail services, electronic information sources, video and voice services, servers, websites, mobile devices, and related services) to assist members of the Caltech community in the pursuit of education and research. This policy, in conjunction with other applicable Caltech policies, sets forth the acceptable use of all electronic information resources owned or managed by Caltech (including those operated by third parties for Caltech, such as accounts issued by third-party cloud services for Caltech) (collectively, “**Caltech IT resources**”) and describes the rights and responsibilities of Caltech and faculty, staff, students, and other members of or visitors to the Caltech community with respect to the use of these resources.

Caltech IT resources are intended to be used to carry out the legitimate business of Caltech, although some incidental personal use is permitted. Faculty, staff, students, and other members of or visitors to the Caltech community (“users”) who use Caltech’s electronic information resources should be guided by the Caltech Code of Conduct. Passwords and other authentication mechanisms or devices issued to users are for their use only and are not to be shared with others. Users assume responsibility for the appropriate use of Caltech IT resources and agree to comply with all relevant Caltech policies and all applicable local, state, and federal laws. Examples of inappropriate or unauthorized use of Caltech IT resources include:

- sending a communication or using electronic information resources, including websites that illegally discriminate against, harass, defame, or threaten individuals or organizations;
- engaging in illegal conduct or conduct that violates Caltech policy;
- destruction of, damage to, or malicious tampering with equipment, software, or data belonging to others;
- disruption, interception, or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications;
- interference with use of Caltech systems;
- violations of computer security systems;
- unauthorized use of accounts, access codes, or identification numbers;
- use that intentionally impedes the legitimate computing activities of others;
- use for commercial purposes;
- use for political or lobbying activity that jeopardizes Caltech’s tax-exempt status and violates Caltech policy;
- violation of copyrights, software license agreements, patent protections and authorizations, or protections on proprietary or confidential information;
- violation of copyright laws by downloading and sharing copyrighted files;

- unauthorized use of Caltech's trademarks;
- violations of privacy;
- academic dishonesty;
- sending chain mail, spam, or other junk messages;
- fraudulent activity using Caltech IT resources;
- downloading, viewing, and/or sharing of materials in violation of Caltech's policies regarding [Unlawful Harassment](#) and [Sex- and Gender-Based Misconduct](#);
- unauthorized intrusion into computer systems to alter or destroy data or computer applications (e.g., hacking or cracking);
- unauthorized security testing or scanning of Caltech IT resources or of another entity; or
- sending communications that attempt to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else.

Caltech will apply this policy consistent with applicable requirements under the laws and regulations governing Caltech's operations. This policy will not be construed or applied in a manner that improperly interferes with employees' rights under the National Labor Relations Act.

Caltech IT resources are Caltech property or licensed by Caltech for Caltech's use. Users of Caltech IT resources should not have an expectation of privacy with respect to their use of these resources or any of the data, files, or other records generated by, stored, or maintained on them. For cybersecurity and other lawful purposes, Caltech may collect, store, and analyze information on both of the following: (1) any and all use of Caltech's electronic information resources and (2) any data or communications transmitted to or from, received or printed from, or created, stored, accessed, or recorded on Caltech's electronic information resources. This is true regardless of the labeling of the data, the use of encryption, the deletion of the data or communications, or any other factor.

Password capabilities and other authentication measures are provided to users in order to safeguard electronic messages, data, files, and other records (including computer files and records, electronic mail, and voicemail) from unauthorized use. These safeguards are not intended to provide confidentiality from Caltech monitoring with respect to personal messages or files stored on electronic information resources owned and managed by Caltech.

While Caltech does not routinely examine the content of electronic mail messages or otherwise monitor individual usage, it does routinely monitor the normal operation of computing and networking resources, including network activity patterns, system logs, general and individual usage patterns, and other indicia necessary to ensure the integrity and stability of its electronic information resources.

Caltech will investigate suspected abuse, misuse, or compromise of its resources, systems, and services. Any user found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including loss of administrative rights or network/system access and termination of employment or admission to the Caltech community.


Caltech retains the right to inspect, review, or retain the content of electronic messages or other data, files, or records generated, stored, or maintained on Caltech IT resources at any time without

prior notification. Any such action will be taken for reasons Caltech, within its discretion, deems to be legitimate. These legitimate reasons may include, but are not limited to, responding to lawful subpoenas or court orders; investigating misconduct (including research misconduct); determining compliance with Caltech policies and the law; and locating electronic messages, data, files, or other records related to these purposes. Users must therefore understand that any electronic messages, data, files, and other records generated by, stored, or maintained on Caltech IT resources may be electronically accessed, reconstructed, or retrieved by Caltech even after they have been deleted.

Caltech personnel who wish to access the content of electronic mail, data, files, or other records generated, stored, or maintained by any user must request authorization as follows: (1) from the provost for any situations that require access to electronic material associated with faculty and other academic personnel; (2) from the vice president for administration and chief financial officer for staff and postdoctoral scholars at campus or the JPL director for human resources for employees and postdoctoral scholars at JPL; (3) from the vice president for student affairs for students; or (4) from the general counsel for the purposes of complying with legal processes and requirements or to preserve user electronic information for possible subsequent access in accordance with this policy. In all cases, the Office of the General Counsel should be consulted prior to deciding on whether to grant access. In the case of a time-critical matter, if the authorizing official is unavailable for a timely response, the general counsel may authorize access. Users of Caltech IT resources are advised that some authorizations already have been granted. For example, the Caltech information security team has certain authority to monitor Caltech IT resources for cybersecurity purposes.

In conclusion, the use of Caltech electronic information resources is a privilege, not a right, and Caltech may revoke this privilege or decline to extend this privilege at any time.

Suspected illegal acts involving Caltech electronic information resources may be reported to governmental authorities and may result in prosecution by those authorities. Any questions concerning the appropriate use of any of Caltech's electronic information resources or relevant Caltech policies should be directed to the provost, the general counsel, the chief information officer, the associate vice president for human resources, the JPL director for human resources, the dean of undergraduate students, or the dean of graduate studies.



Thomas F. Rosenbaum
President

Related Policies:

- [Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy](#)
- [Sex- and Gender-Based Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Unlawful Harassment Policy](#)
- [IMSS Security Policies](#)
- [Caltech Network Policy](#)
- [Confidentiality of Private Information Policy](#)
- [Vulnerability Scan Policy](#)
- [DMCA Infringement Policy](#)

- [Safeguarding Export Controlled Data Policy](#)
- [Email Policies](#)