

Misuse of Computers

[Faculty Handbook Category #3]

St. Olaf College provides computing and networking resources in order to meet the academic needs of students, faculty, and staff. Any actions which undermine this important college goal, are subject to disciplinary review. Such acts include, but are not limited to, unauthorized reproduction of copyrighted materials; facilitating others' use of the St. Olaf computing and network resources for unethical and illegal activities; tampering with others' accounts; wasting or damaging computer resources; breaking system security; degrading computer system performance; creating or posting material that is offensive, pornographic, libelous, or intended to harass. No students, faculty, and staff may use St. Olaf computers or networking resources for profit-making ventures. No employee or student may use St. Olaf computers or network on behalf of external organizations or persons unless such use is directly related to St. Olaf courses or to faculty research and professional development. Such actions constitute a violation of the social contract of the academic community as much as invasion of privacy, theft of property, misappropriation of ideas, or interference with others' rights.

St. Olaf College supports the 1987 statement on software and intellectual rights adopted by EDUCOM:

Respect for intellectual labor and creativity is vital to academic discourse and enterprise. This principle applies to works of all authors and publishers in all media. It encompasses respect for the right to acknowledgment, right to privacy, and right to determine the form, manner, and terms of publication and distribution. Because electronic information is volatile and easily reproduced, respect for the work and personal expression of others is especially critical in computer environments. Violations of authorial integrity, including plagiarism, invasion of privacy, unauthorized access, and trade secret and copyright violations may be grounds for sanctions against members of the academic community.

Students, faculty, and staff should also be aware that some types of computer abuse (notably intentional damage, unauthorized alteration or access to computer systems) are also violations of Minnesota and federal criminal codes, as is the unauthorized reproduction of copyrighted materials.

Use of St. Olaf computers and network resources is a privilege granted only to those who use these systems responsibly. This policy applies to students, faculty, and staff. Students suspected of abusing computers and network resources at St. Olaf will be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Such actions may involve review by an appropriate branch of the St. Olaf Judicial System (Student Judicial Council, College Judiciary, administrative hearings, or Honor Council), direct action by the Dean of Students, or referral to state or federal authorities. Penalties may include fines, suspension or revocation of computing and networking privileges, academic probation, or dismissal. Faculty suspected of abusing computers and network resources at St. Olaf will be referred to the Dean of the College for appropriate action. Staff suspected of abusing computers and network systems at St. Olaf will be referred to their supervisor for appropriate action.

In addition, the office of Information Technology reserves the right to suspend access to St. Olaf computing and networking systems to any student, faculty, and staff who is suspected of gross abuse of computer privileges (including but not limited to unauthorized copying of materials, facilitating others' in the use of the St. Olaf computing and network resources for unethical and illegal activities, tampering with others' accounts, wasting or damaging computer resources, breaking system security, degrading computer system performance, creating or posting of material that is offensive, pornographic, libelous, or intended to harass). Such actions may be appealed to the Academic Computing Policy Board.

(September, 2002)