



Syracuse University

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Information Technology

Computing and Electronic Communications Policy

Scope

Faculty, staff, and students

Policy Statement

This policy governs the use of computers, networks, and related services on the Syracuse University campus. Users of these resources are responsible for reading and understanding this policy. Computers and networks can provide access to resources on and off campus, as well as the ability to communicate with other users worldwide. Such access is a privilege and requires that individual users act responsibly. Users must respect the rights of others, respect the integrity of the computers, networks, and related services, and observe all relevant laws, regulations, contractual obligations, and University policies and procedures.

The Syracuse University computer system

The Syracuse University Computer System includes: computers, communications networks, computer accounts, web pages, network access, central computing and telecommunications facilities, and related services. The Computer System at Syracuse University is maintained by Information Technology and Services (ITS), located at 4-173 Center for Science and Technology.

Access to and use of the University's Computer System is a privilege granted to currently enrolled Syracuse University students, faculty, and staff. All users of the Computer System must act responsibly and maintain the integrity of the Computer System. The University reserves the right to deny, limit, revoke, or extend computing privileges and access to the Computer System in its discretion. In addition, alleged violations of this policy or violation of other University policies in the course of using the Computer System may result in an immediate loss of computing privileges and may also result in the referral of the matter to the University Judicial System or other appropriate authority.

All messages, data files and programs stored in or transmitted via the Computer System ("Electronic Communications") are Syracuse University records. The University reserves the right to access and disclose all messages, data files and programs sent over or stored in its Computer System for any purpose.

It is the responsibility of all users of the Computer System to notify ITS about violations of laws and

University policies in connection with the use of the Computer System, as well as about potential loopholes in the security of the Computer System. The user community is expected to cooperate with ITS in its operation of the Computer System, as well as in the investigation of Computer System misuse or abuse. Any concerns, complaints, or reports of misconduct with regard to the Computer System should be reported to the Director of Client Services at 443-3631.

- I. **Computer Accounts.** Computer accounts are issued to University faculty, staff, and students, and other individuals at the discretion of ITS, for University purposes. These accounts must not be used for commercial purposes.

Every computer account issued by the University is the responsibility of the person in whose name it is issued. That individual must keep the account secure from unauthorized access by keeping the password secret, by changing the password often, and by reporting to ITS when anyone else is using the account without permission. Passwords are intended to help prevent unauthorized access and may not be shared. The contents of all accounts are subject to access and disclosure by the University as set forth in this policy.

- II. **Electronic Communications.** Syracuse University has established email as a primary vehicle for official communication with students. Emergency notifications, educational dialog, research and general business correspondence are all consistently enhanced in institutions of higher learning where email policies exist and are supported by procedures, practice and culture.

An official email address is established and assigned by Information Technology and Services for each registered student, and current faculty and staff member. All University communications sent via email will be sent to this address. Faculty members will use the official University email address to communicate with a student registered in their classes and administrative units will correspond with students via this address.

The University expects that students will receive and read email in a timely manner. Students are expected to maintain their accounts and check their email daily so that new mail will be properly received and read. A student's failure to receive and read University communications delivered to his/her official email address in a timely manner does not absolve that student from knowing and complying with the content of such communications.

While students are allowed to redirect email from their official University email address to another address (e.g. @hotmail.com, @aol.com), they do so at their own risk. The University is not responsible for the handling of email by other service providers. Having email redirected does not absolve students from knowing and complying with the content of the communication sent to their official University email address.

- III. **Improper Use of the Computer System.** Improper use of the Computer System is prohibited. The following are examples of improper use of the Computer System:

- **Prohibited Behavior:** Storing, transmitting or printing any of the following types of Electronic Communications on the Computer System is prohibited: material that infringes upon the rights of another person; material that is obscene; material that consists of any advertisements for commercial enterprises; material or behaviors that violate the Syracuse University Code of Student Conduct or other University policies; or, material that may injure someone else and/or lead to a lawsuit or criminal charges.
- **Harassment:** Harassing others by sending annoying, abusive, profane, threatening, defamatory or offensive messages is prohibited. Some examples include: obscene, threatening, or repeated unnecessary messages; sexually, ethnically, racially, or religiously offensive messages; continuing to send messages after a request to stop; and procedures that hinder a computer session.
- **Destruction, Sabotage:** Intentionally destroying anything stored on the Computer System, including anything stored in primary or random access memory is prohibited. Deliberately performing any act that will seriously impact the operation of the Computer System. This includes, but is not limited to, tampering with components of a local area network (LAN) or the high-speed backbone network, otherwise blocking communication lines, or interfering with the operational readiness of a computer or peripheral.
- **Evasive Techniques:** Attempts to avoid detection of improper or illegal behavior by

encrypting electronic messages and computer files are prohibited.

- **Unauthorized Use/Access:** Using the Computer System to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to remote computers is prohibited. Other prohibited behaviors include: actions that give simulated sign off messages, public announcements, or other fraudulent system responses; possessing or changing system control information (e.g., program status, protection codes, and accounting information), especially when used to defraud others, obtain passwords, gain access to and/or copy other user's electronic communications, or otherwise interfere with or destroy the work of other users.
- **E-Mail Forgery:** Forging e-mail, including concealment of the sender's identity, is prohibited.
- **Theft/Unauthorized Use of Data:** Data created and maintained by the University, or acquired from outside sources, are vital assets of the University and may be subject to a variety of use restrictions. Theft of or unauthorized access to data is prohibited.
- **Program Theft:** Unless specifically authorized, copying computer program(s) from the Computer System is prohibited.
- **Viruses, etc:** Running or installing on the Computer System, or giving to another, a program that could result in the eventual damage to a file or the Computer System, and/or the reproduction of itself, is prohibited. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, the classes of programs known as computer viruses, Trojan horses, and worms.
- **Security:** Attempting to circumvent data protection schemes or uncover security loopholes is prohibited.
- **Wasting Resources:** Performing acts that are wasteful of computing resources or that unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others is prohibited. These acts include, but are not limited to: sending mass mailings or chain letters; creating unnecessary multiple jobs or processes; generating unnecessary or excessive output or printing; or, creating unnecessary network traffic.
- **Accessing User Accounts:** Attempting to access or monitor another user's electronic communications is prohibited. Accessing, reading, copying, changing, disclosing, or deleting another user's messages, files or software without permission of the owner is prohibited.
- **Recreational Use:** Recreational use of the Computer System that interferes with the ability of other users to complete their work is prohibited. In particular, if you are using a machine in a Public Computer Lab for recreational purposes, and others are waiting to use a machine for academic purposes, you are expected to give up your seat.

IV. **Public Computer Labs.** Public Computer Labs are part of the Computer System operated by ITS and are a shared University resource available on a first-come, first-served basis. A valid University or SUNY ESF ID card is required to use the Labs. Food and beverages are prohibited in the Labs. Labs may be reserved for exclusive use by a class or group; schedules are posted on each Lab's door and published electronically to various new groups every week. Some Labs are provided by departments other than ITS; contact those departments for their additional usage guidelines.

V. **Mail Distribution Lists.** Mail Distribution Lists (often called LISTSERV lists) facilitate E-mail discussions on specified topics. Syracuse University faculty, staff, and students may request to sign up for list maintenance and membership, and have the discretion to control list content. List owners should not add subscribers to their list without the knowledge and consent of the subscriber to be added.

The University does not monitor the content of Mail Distribution List e-mail, except as otherwise provided in this policy, and is not responsible for the content of such messages. However, the University may terminate lists that consume excessive resources or are no longer relevant to the purposes of the University. In addition, the University may take action where lists violate this computing policy or other University policies. Posting of material unrelated to a list's usual

content may be prohibited in the discretion of the list's owner. Posting unrelated material to multiple lists ("spamming") will be grounds for account revocation and other disciplinary action.

General e-mail announcements to the University community, such as HOTNEWS and system "Messages of the Day" are limited to those messages that concern University business and are deemed to be of the greatest interest to the most recipients.

- VI. **Backup Copies.** Data on the Computer System are subject to backup at the discretion of the University.
- VII. **Deleting Electronic Communications.** Users of the Computer System should be aware that electronic Communications are not necessarily erased from the Computer System when the user "deletes" the file or message. Deleting an Electronic Communication causes the Computer System to "forget" where the message or file is stored on the Computer System. In addition, Electronic Communication may continue to be stored on a backup copy long after it is "deleted" by the user. As a result, deleted messages often can be retrieved or recovered after they have been deleted.
- VIII. **Computer Law.** Under Article 156 of the New York State Penal Code, criminal sanctions are imposed for offenses involving computers, software, and computer data. The offenses include unauthorized use of the computer, computer trespass, computer tampering, and unlawful duplication or possession of computer related material. Improper or unauthorized access to, or release or manipulation of, any student record in such form is included in such offenses.

All computers, software, data, business records, and student records of the University in any form, including electronic or paper, belong to the institution. Any person committing an offense with respect to them may be subject personally to criminal sanctions and other liability. Federal laws may also apply to some circumstances.

- IX. **Copyright Infringement.** The Copyright Laws of the United States prohibit unauthorized copying. Violators may be subject to criminal prosecution and/or be liable for monetary damages.

In general, you may not copy, download, install or use software on the Computer System without acquiring a license from the publisher. (For example, you may not copy it from a friend or other source.) Furthermore, you may not copy the University's software, unless such copying is specifically permitted by the license agreement.

The ability to download documents from the Internet, and to attach files to E-mail messages, increases the opportunity for and risk of copyright infringement. A user can be liable for the unauthorized copying and distribution of copyrighted material through the use of download programs and E-mail. Accordingly, you may not copy and/or distribute any materials of a third party (including software, database files, documentation, articles, graphics files, audio or video files) unless you have the written permission of the copyright holder to do so. Any questions regarding copying or downloading should be directed to ITS.

Policy Administration

- [Information Technology and Services](#)

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