

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Subject: Responsible Use of College Computing Resources Reference: E-XXXI

Source: Board of Trustees Eff. Date: February 21, 2011

Approval Auth.: Board of Trustees Approved: _____

Remarks: Replaced previous policy dated July 17, 2000.

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General Statement

As a part of the physical and social learning infrastructure, McLennan Community College acquires, develops, and maintains computers, computer systems, and networks. These computing resources are intended for college-related purposes, including direct and indirect support of the college's instruction and service missions; of college administrative functions; of student and campus activities; and of the free exchange of ideas among members of the college community and between the college community and the wider local, national, and world communities.

The rights of academic freedom and freedom of expression apply to the use of college computing resources. So, too, however, do the responsibilities and limitations associated with those rights. The use of college computing resources, like the use of any other college-provided resource and like any other college-related activity, is subject to the normal requirements of legal and ethical behavior within the college community. Thus, legitimate use of a computer, computer system, or network does not extend to whatever is technically possible. Although some limitations are built into computer operating systems and networks, those limitations are not the sole restrictions on what is permissible. Users must abide by all applicable restrictions, whether or not they are built into the operating system or network and whether or not they can be circumvented by technical means.

Applicability

This policy applies to all users of college computing resources, and to all uses of those resources, whether on campus or from remote locations. Additional policies may apply to specific computers, computer systems, or networks provided or operated by specific units (e.g., Library, labs, Internet Dial-up accounts) of the college or to uses within specific units. Users should consult laboratory staff or supervisors in computer labs for further information about specific lab guidelines.

Policy

All users of college computing resources must:

- **Comply with all federal, Texas, and other applicable laws; all generally applicable college rules and policies and all applicable contracts and licenses.** Examples of such laws, rules, policies, contracts, and licenses include the laws of libel, privacy, copyright, trademark, obscenity, and child pornography; the Electronic Communications Privacy Act and the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, which prohibit "hacking", "cracking", and similar activities; the college's General Conduct Policy; the college's sexual harassment policy; and all applicable software licenses. Users who engage in electronic communications with persons in other states or countries or on other systems or networks should be aware that they may also be subject to the laws of those other states and countries and the rules and policies of those other systems and networks. Users are responsible for ascertaining, understanding, and complying with the laws, rules, policies, contracts, and licenses applicable to their particular uses.
- **Use only those computing resources that they are authorized to use and use them only in the manner and to the extent authorized.** Ability to access computing resources does not, by itself, imply authorization to do so. Users are responsible for ascertaining what authorizations are necessary and for obtaining them before proceeding. Accounts and passwords may not, under any circumstances, be shared with, or used by, persons other than those to whom they have been assigned by the college.
- **Respect the privacy of other users and their accounts, regardless of whether those accounts are securely protected.** Again, ability to access other persons' accounts does not, by itself, imply authorization to do so. Users are responsible for ascertaining what authorizations are necessary and for obtaining them before proceeding.
- **Respect the finite capacity of those resources and limit use so as not to consume an unreasonable amount of those resources or to interfere unreasonably with the activity of other users.** Although there is no set bandwidth, disk space, CPU time, or other limit applicable to all uses of college computing resources, the college may require users of those resources to limit or refrain from specific uses in accordance with this principle. The reasonableness of any particular use will be judged in the context of all of the relevant circumstances. (Specific units may develop guidelines that may limit use of resources in particular areas of the college.
- **Refrain from using those resources for personal commercial**

purposes or for personal financial or other gain. While personal use of college computing resources for other purposes is permitted when it does not consume a significant amount of those resources, does not interfere with the performance of the user's job or other college responsibilities, and is otherwise in compliance with this policy, users are not authorized to use the college's resources for personal commercial purposes or for personal financial or other gain. Further limits may be imposed upon personal use in accordance with normal supervisory procedures.

- **Refrain from stating or implying that they speak on behalf of the college and from using college trademarks and logos without authorization to do so.** Affiliation with the college does not, by itself, imply authorization to speak on behalf of the college. Authorization to use college trademarks and logos on college computing resources may be granted only by the President, as appropriate. The use of suitable disclaimers is encouraged.

Enforcement

Users who violate this policy may be denied access to college computing resources and may be subject to other penalties and disciplinary action, both within and outside of the college. Violations will normally be handled through the college disciplinary procedures applicable to the relevant user. For example, alleged violations by students will normally be investigated, and any penalties or other discipline will normally be imposed, by the Vice President, Student Services. However, the college may temporarily suspend or block access to an account, prior to the initiation or completion of such procedures, when it reasonably appears necessary to do so in order to protect the integrity, security, or functionality of college or other computing resources or to protect the college from liability. The college may also refer suspected violations of applicable law to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Security and Privacy

The college employs various measures to protect the security of its computing resources and of their users' accounts. Users should be aware, however, that the college cannot guarantee such security. Users should therefore engage in "safe computing" practices by establishing appropriate access restrictions for their accounts, guarding their passwords, and changing them regularly.

Users should also be aware that their uses of college computing resources are not completely private. While the college does not routinely monitor individual usage of its computing resources, the normal operation and maintenance of the college's computing resources require the backup and caching of data and communications, the logging of activity, the monitoring of general usage patterns, and other such activities that are necessary for the rendition of service. The college may also specifically monitor the activity and accounts of individual users of college computing resources, including individual

login sessions and communications, without notice, when (a) the user has voluntarily made them accessible to the public, as by posting to Usenet or a web page; (b) it reasonably appears necessary to do so to protect the integrity, security, or functionality of college or other computing resources or to protect the college from liability; (c) there is reasonable cause to believe that the user has violated, or is violating, this policy; (d) an account appears to be engaged in unusual or unusually excessive activity, as indicated by the monitoring of general activity and usage patterns; or (e) it is otherwise required or permitted by law. Any such individual monitoring other than that specified in "(a)", required by law, or necessary to respond to perceived emergency situations, must be authorized in advance by the President or the President's designees.

The college, in its discretion, may disclose the results of any such general or individual monitoring, including the contents and records of individual communications, to appropriate college personnel or law enforcement agencies and may use those results in appropriate college disciplinary proceedings. Communications made by means of college computing resources may be subject to the Texas Public Information Statutes to the same extent as they would be if made on paper.