

Acceptable Use of Information Systems at Virginia Tech

Access to computer systems and networks owned or operated by Virginia Tech imposes certain responsibilities and obligations and is granted subject to university policies, and local, state, and federal laws. Acceptable use always is ethical, reflects academic honesty, and shows restraint in the consumption of shared resources. It demonstrates respect for intellectual property, ownership of data, system security mechanisms, and individuals' rights to privacy and to freedom from intimidation and harassment. The referring policy is Policy 7000: Acceptable Use and Administration of Computer and Communication Systems. (PDF)

Standard

In making acceptable use of resources you must:

- use resources only for authorized purposes.
- protect your userid and system from unauthorized use. You are responsible for all activities on your userid or that originate from your system.
- access only information that is your own, that is publicly available, or to which you have been given authorized access.
- use only legal versions of copyrighted software in compliance with vendor license requirements.
- be considerate in your use of shared resources. Refrain from monopolizing systems, overloading networks with excessive data, degrading services, or wasting computer time, connect time, disk space, printer paper, manuals, or other resources.

In making acceptable use of resources you must NOT:

- use another person's system, userid, password, files, or data without permission.
- use computer programs to decode passwords or access control information.
- attempt to circumvent or subvert system or network security measures.
- engage in any activity that might be purposefully harmful to systems or to any information stored thereon, such as creating or propagating viruses, disrupting services, or damaging files or making unauthorized modifications to university data.
- use university systems for commercial or partisan political purposes, such as using electronic mail to circulate advertising for products or for political candidates.
- make or use illegal copies of copyrighted materials or software, store such copies on university systems, or transmit them over university networks.
- use mail or messaging services to harass or intimidate another person, for example, by broadcasting unsolicited messages, by repeatedly sending unwanted mail, or by using someone else's name or userid.
- waste computing resources or network resources, for example, by intentionally placing a program in an endless loop, printing excessive amounts of paper, or by sending chain letters or unsolicited mass mailings.
- use the university's systems or networks for personal gain; for example, by selling access to your userid or to university systems or networks, or by performing work for profit with university resources in a manner not authorized by the university.
- engage in any other activity that does not comply with the General Principles presented above.

Enforcement

The university considers any violation of acceptable use principles or guidelines to be a serious offense and reserves the right to copy and examine any files or information resident on university systems allegedly related to unacceptable use, and to protect its network from systems and events that threaten or degrade operations. Violators are subject to disciplinary action as prescribed in the Honor Codes, the University Policies for Student Life, and employee handbooks. Offenders also may be prosecuted under laws including (but not limited to) the Communications Act of 1934 (amended), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986, The Computer Virus Eradication Act of 1989, Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property, The Virginia Computer Crimes Act, and the Electronic Communications Privacy Act. Access to the text of these laws is available through the Newman Library Reference Department.

Information Disclaimer

Individuals using computer systems owned by Virginia Tech do so subject to applicable laws and University policies. Virginia Tech disclaims any responsibility and/or warranties for information and materials residing on non-university systems or available over publicly accessible networks. Such materials do not necessarily reflect the attitudes, opinions, or values of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia Tech, its faculty, staff, or students.