

Appropriate Use of Information Resources

This brochure will help answer questions regarding the appropriate use of computing and other information resources.

General Use of Computing and Network Resources

The ASU Community is encouraged to use resources on the campus wide network and the Internet. Access to these resources is provided to students, faculty, and staff for a wide variety of purposes. These resources are limited, and how each individual uses them may impact the work of other members of the academic community and beyond. It is important that users know their individual obligations and what constitutes proper use and behavior. In general, common sense is an excellent guide to what constitutes appropriate behavior and use of computing resources. Users should utilize resources in a manner that is consistent with the instructional, research, public service, and administrative objectives of ASU. Appropriate use and behavior demonstrates a respect for:

- The rights of others to privacy;
- Intellectual property rights (e.g., licenses and copyrights);
- Ownership and custodianship of data and information resources;
- System mechanisms designed to limit access;
- Ethical use of state-owned resources; and
- The right of individuals to be free of intimidation, harassment, and unwarranted annoyance.

Users should note that Federal and State laws, Texas State University System (TSUS) rules and regulations as well as ASU policies also govern the usage of computing resources. Violation of Federal and State laws, TSUS rules and regulations or ASU policies may result in immediate suspension of privileges, with referral to appropriate ASU authorities for consideration of other appropriate penalties. Therefore, in order to insure the ethical, efficient, effective, and lawful use of information technology resources such as computer hardware, software, networks and systems, including the Internet, campus Intranet and attached networks, the following policies have been adopted.

Unethical and Illegal Types of Behavior

Behaviors that can create problems fall into the following categories. This list, while not exhaustive, should provide the basis of what constitutes illegal or unethical on-line behavior.

Break-Ins

Users may not attempt to gain access to computer systems on or off campus to which they have not been granted access.

Theft of Intellectual Property

Under the terms of the Berne Convention and the copyright laws of the United States and most other nations, all intellectual property is granted copyright protection as soon as it is committed to a tangible medium, including information resident in computer files, such as but not limited to electronic manuscripts, programs, applications, databases, graphic images, photographs, art work, recordings of voice and music audio, and video.

- Users may not copy or redistribute software, whether or not it is copyrighted.
- Users may not copy or redistribute other information, without the explicit permission of the owner.
- Users may not attempt to override copy protection on commercial software.

Annoyance and Harassment

Users may not use the network in any way to harass another person. Users must respect the rights of others, and must not use information technology resources to transmit abusive, threatening, or harassing materials to other users. While debate on controversial issues is both inevitable and essential, it is each user's responsibility to debate in such a way that advances the cause of learning and mutual understanding.

Privacy and Security

While ASU has no interest in regulating the content of user messages or files, ASU cannot guarantee the privacy or confidentiality of electronic documents. Good judgment dictates that email messages be created and transmitted with the understanding that email is no more secure than other forms of communication, and that email may be an inappropriate vehicle for transmitting personal and/or confidential information.

Forging, Password Sharing, Password Stealing

- You are the only person authorized to use an information technology resource based on your account and password.
- Users may not attempt to impersonate or represent another individual or affiliation by submitting forged information in order to dissociate one's self from responsibility for their own actions. Alteration of the source of an electronic message or posting is always unethical and may be illegal.
- Users should never give their password to anyone.
- Users may not seek to determine another person's password, through cracking, decryption, interception or other means.

