



THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON DC

**Responsible University Official:**  
Chief Information Officer  
**Responsible Office:** Division of  
Information Technology  
**Origination Date:** Not Available

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR USERS OF COMPUTING SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

### Policy Statement

The computing systems and services at the university are to be used in a manner that supports the mission of the university.

### Reason for Policy/Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance on the proper and allowable use of university- owned and-maintained computer equipment and networks.

### Who Needs to Know This Policy

All faculty, staff, students, contractors, consultants, temporaries, as well as those who represent themselves as being associated with the university and who make use of university computing and/or information technology (IT) resources need to be familiar with this policy.

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# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR USERS OF COMPUTING SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

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## **Policy**

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Users must apply standards of normal academic and professional ethics and considerate conduct in the use of all university computing systems and services or any other computer system accessed by virtue of their affiliation with the university. Users agree to and are bound by these and all other applicable rules and regulations related to appropriate legal, and ethical use of university computing systems and services, including the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and the [Faculty Handbook](#).

### **Identification and Authorization**

Individuals using university computing systems and services must be identified either through the physical location of an office computer or through an authorized university computer account in the case of multiple user systems. Individuals may not knowingly access or use another person's computer account or knowingly allow another person to use his or her account. Users should log out of shared systems and take reasonable precautions to secure access to office computers. university computing systems and services may not be used intentionally to misuse or gain unauthorized access to computing accounts or systems inside or outside of the university's systems.

### **Purpose**

Computing systems and services are provided in support of the teaching, research, and public service mission of the university, and the administrative functions that support this mission. The unauthorized use of university computing systems and services for personal profit is prohibited. university computing systems and services may be used for personal purposes provided that such use does not (i) directly or indirectly interfere with the university operation of computing facilities, (ii) burden the university with noticeable incremental cost, (iii) interfere with the computer user's employment or other obligations to the university, or (iv) violate other university regulations or law.

### **Copyright and Intellectual Property**

Computer users may use only legally obtained, licensed data or software in compliance with University copyright policies as well as license or other agreements and applicable copyright or intellectual property laws. The university is a member of EDUCAUSE and users are expected to adhere to the Code of Software and Intellectual Rights which states:

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 acknowledgement, right to privacy, and right to determine the form, manner, and terms of publication and distribution.

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Because electronic information is 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.

(See: "Using Software: A Guide to the Legal and Ethical Use of Software for Members of the Academic Community," Educom/ITAA, 1992.  
<http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/html/code.html>)

### **Privacy**

Computer users must respect the privacy of others by refraining from inspecting, broadcasting, or modifying data without the consent of the individual or individuals involved, except as permitted as part of their employment, and then only to the extent necessary for employment. University employees and others may not seek out, examine, use, modify, or disclose, without authorization, personal or confidential information which they need not access as part of their job function. Employees must take necessary precautions to protect the confidentiality of personal or confidential information encountered in the performance of their duties or otherwise.

### **False Identity**

University users of e-mail or other electronic communications shall not employ a false identity, nor may e-mail be sent anonymously with the intent to deceive.

### **Interference**

University computing services shall not be used for purposes that cause, or could reasonably be expected to cause, directly or indirectly, excessive strain on any computing facilities or unwarranted/unsolicited interference with others' use of computing systems and services.

This provision explicitly prohibits the posting of unsolicited electronic mail to lists of individuals, and the inclusion on electronic mail lists of individuals who have not requested membership on the lists.

Students may be required to accept membership in an electronic mailing list for a class in which they are registered or for the purpose of official communications between authorized University personnel and an identified group of students.

Faculty and staff may be required to accept membership in an electronic mailing list for the purpose of official university communications.

The university may take action to protect computer users from external interference. The Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) or someone designated by the CIO, and the

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Office of the Senior Vice President and General Counsel may authorize the termination of connections with external providers whose users interfere with the operation of GW computing facilities.

### **Obscenity and Harassment**

University computing systems and services may not be used in an obscene, harassing or otherwise inappropriate manner.

As outlined in the university's Equal Employment Opportunity statement, university computing systems will not be used to unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

### **Enforcement**

Computer activity may be monitored by authorized individuals for purposes of maintaining system performance and security. In instances when individuals are suspected of abuse of computer usage, the contents of user files may also be inspected upon the approval of the Office of the CIO or someone designated by the CIO and the Office of the Senior Vice President and General Counsel.

Violations of university policies governing the use of university computing services may result in restriction or termination of access to university information technology resources. In addition, disciplinary action may be applicable under other university policies, guidelines, procedures, or collective bargaining agreements, up to and including dismissal.

At the discretion of the manager of the computer system or service in question, or designee, in collaboration with the appropriate authority, computer use privileges may be temporarily or permanently revoked pending the outcome of an investigation of misuse, or finding of violation of this Code. Where practical and appropriate, 24-hour notice will be given in advance of revocation.

All data, programs, and files placed on or contained in the university computer systems are subject to the university's copyright, patent, and privacy policies.

Additional rules may be in effect at specific computer facilities at the discretion of the directors of those facilities.

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### **Website Address for This Policy**

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[GW University Policies](#)

## Contacts/Responsibilities

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
Policy Issues	Office of the Chief Information Officer	(202) 994-6005

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## Definitions

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The phrase “*The George Washington University computing systems and services*” refers to all computers owned or operated by the university and includes hardware, software, data, communication networks associated with these systems, and all allied services. The systems range from multi-user systems to single-user personal computers, whether free standing or connected to networks.

“*Users*” are all those individuals with privileges on university computing systems and services.

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## Related Information

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[Code of Student Conduct](#)  
[Information Security Policy](#)  
[Faculty Handbook](#)  
[Copyright Policy](#)  
[Network Usage and Security Policy](#)

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## Who Approved This Policy

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Louis H. Katz, Executive Vice President and Treasurer

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## History/Revision Dates

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**Origination Date:** Not Available  
**Last Amended Date:** January 1, 2005  
**Next Review Date:** April 30, 2013