



THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON DC

**Responsible University Official:**  
Vice President and Chief Information  
Officer  
**Responsible Office:** Information  
Systems and Services  
**Origination Date:** November 28,  
2003

## **GWMAIL POLICY**

---

### **Policy Statement**

---

This policy applies to all users of the GWMail e-mail system. All GWMail users are expected to be familiar with and comply with this policy.

Violations of University policies governing the use of University electronic mail services may result in restriction of access to University information technology resources in addition to any disciplinary action that may be applicable under other University policies, guidelines, or implementing procedures, up to and including dismissal.

Use of the GWMail system, including mass e-mails and LISTSERVS, implies consent to the [Code of Conduct for Users of Computing Systems](#) at The George Washington University (GW).

---

### **Reason for Policy/Purpose**

---

The GWMail e-mail policy is in place to govern usage of the GWMail e-mail system. It sets forth the eligibility for an e-mail account, the policies regarding privacy and applicability of laws and policies to the e-mail system, and supported protocols for the GWMail system. It also details the policies on unsolicited e-mail, mass e-mails, LISTSERVS, message relaying, backups, virus protection, and inactive accounts. In addition, it sets forth the maximum recipients for an e-mail message and the disk space quota for GWMail users. Finally, it details what is considered inappropriate usage of a GWMail account.

---

### **Who Needs to Know This Policy**

---

All faculty, staff, students, contractors, consultants, temporaries, as well as those who represent themselves as being connected, in one way or another, with GW, who make use of University computing and/or information technology (IT) resources need to be familiar with this policy.

---

## Table of Contents

---

<b>Policy Statement</b> .....	1
<b>Reason for Policy/Purpose</b> .....	1
<b>Who Needs to Know This Policy</b> .....	1
<b>Policy</b> .....	2
Eligibility .....	2
Requirements .....	3
Supported Clients.....	3
Maximum Message Size.....	3
Maximum Recipients, Unsolicited and Mass E-mail and LISTSERVS.....	3
Disk Quotas.....	4
Message Relaying.....	5
Backups.....	5
Virus Protection .....	5
Inappropriate Usage.....	6
Privacy and Applicability of Laws and Policies.....	6
Liability.....	7
Mass E-mails.....	8
<b>Procedures</b> .....	8
LISTSERV Requests .....	8
Mass E-mail Requests.....	9
Required Information.....	9
Audience .....	9
Return Address.....	10
E-mail Message.....	10
<b>Website Address for This Policy</b> .....	10
<b>Contacts/Responsibilities</b> .....	10
<b>Definitions</b> .....	10
<b>Related Information</b> .....	12
<b>Who Approved This Policy</b> .....	12
<b>History/Revision Dates</b> .....	12

---

## Policy

---

### ***Eligibility***

A GW NetID provides access to a number of information systems, including GWMail, the University’s e-mail system. All individuals and organizations with a GW NetID, excluding alumni, are eligible to receive a GWMail e-mail account.

In order to keep a GW e-mail account, the group or individual must maintain eligibility for a GW NetID account. NetID accounts may be termed “inactive” or “purged” for

## GWMAIL POLICY

reasons detailed in the GW NetID Policy, in which case access to the GWMail system would be revoked and, in the case of “purged” accounts, all e-mail irrevocably deleted.

### ***Requirements***

All eligible faculty, staff and students must create and maintain a GWMail e-mail account. Contractors to GW may be required to have and maintain a GWMail account as well. This is required to facilitate the University’s communication of academic, administrative and emergency information. Exceptions may be made for employees without regular access to computing resources. It is permissible to forward mail from the GWMail account to another e-mail account as long as that account is checked regularly. However, it is not advisable to do so, since e-mail communications may contain sensitive information that should not be transmitted out of GW systems.

### ***Supported Clients***

Industry standard IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol) and POP (Post Office Protocol) clients will work with the GWMail e-mail system for all GWMail accounts. IMAP and POP are e-mail retrieval protocols supported by most major e-mail clients, including Netscape Messenger and Microsoft Outlook. A list of University supported clients can be obtained from the ISS Technology Services division. In addition, Information Systems and Services (ISS) provides a supported Web-based client for access to GWMail e-mail, and provides the Pine IMAP client on the Acad academic UNIX machine for text-based access.

### ***Maximum Message Size***

Outgoing and incoming e-mails are limited to 10 megabytes (MB) per message, including the text and all attachments. Messages over the limit will not be delivered or received, and users using smtp.gwu.edu will be informed that their message was not delivered or received. The 10MB limit includes the extra space to allow for overhead space that is taken up when sending attachments.

### ***Maximum Recipients, Unsolicited and Mass E-mail and LISTSERVS***

The GWMail system will only allow sending a message with 50 or less recipients and users using smtp.gwu.edu will be informed that their message was not delivered or sent.

Please note that even if it is technically possible to send an e-mail to a large number of people, you must follow all GW computing policies when sending the e-mail, so it would not be permitted to send unsolicited e-mail to such a list.

Users are not permitted to spam using the University's e-mail service. University members may not send mass amounts of e-mail directly through the GWMail system. Sending e-mail to a large number of willing recipients is best accomplished via GW's LISTSERV service:

- Any faculty or permanent staff member of GW may own listservs.

## GWMAIL POLICY

- Students and student organizations may own lists with a faculty or staff member's sponsorship.
- It is the responsibility of the list owner to manage all administrative tasks associated with the list operation as well as clearly define the purpose of the list for list members and monitor the list to ensure that its use is consistent with its purpose.
- Visit <http://hermes.gwu.edu> for information on LISTSERVs.
- List owners may not subscribe individuals who have not requested membership to a list.
- Schools and academic departments may add their students to a list for educational purposes.
- Professors may require their students join a course list.
- Home departments may add staff to a list as a condition of employment.

### ***Disk Quotas***

Disk space quotas are set for all users of the GWMail system. A user may only store mail on the GWMail system up to their allocated disk space quota.

If an individual reaches 100% utilization of their disk quota, he or she will be unable to receive any additional messages until mail is deleted. To avoid this situation if possible, ISS will send e-mail notifications to the e-mail account in question once a week if the account is at 75% utilization and once a day if the account is at 90% utilization. You can view your quota on the Account Management Console at <https://amc.gwu.edu/>.

The disk quotas are set based on the GW NetID account type, as follows:

Student: 20 MB  
Faculty: 50 MB  
Staff/Research Professional: 50 MB  
Temporary Staff: 20 MB  
Faculty Emeriti: 50 MB  
Visiting Scholar: 20 MB  
Contractor/Consultant: 20 MB  
Friends of the University: 20 MB  
Organization, Student Organization: 20 MB  
Organization, All Other: 50 MB

Disk quotas are set based upon the initial GW NetID account type at the time of account creation, as defined by the Banner system. Those who qualify for multiple types receive the highest quota for which they are eligible.

If an account holder has a change in account type that results in that individual being eligible only for a lower quota than his or her current quota, his or her quota will be reduced to the lower amount. However, prior to reducing the quota, a notification will be sent to the user via e-mail, followed by a three-month waiting period. If the individual's

## GWMAIL POLICY

account type has not changed during that three-month period, the lowered disk quota will be placed into effect.

Quota increases are available to faculty, staff and department classifications only. An increase to 100MB is available upon request to the ISS Help Desk. Increases in excess of 100MB may be requested in 50MB increments for an additional fee.

User accounts that have a quota in excess of 50MB are subject to automatic expiration of INBOX mail messages. Messages stored in the INBOX will be deleted when they age beyond thirty days from the date of receipt.

### ***Message Relaying***

Messages not originating from within GW network domain or IP space will not be sent to non- “.gwu.edu” recipients. Known as message relaying, or ‘third-party relaying,’ this method of sending mail is often used to deliver unsolicited commercial e-mail or other spam messages, because messages can be altered to appear as if someone other than the true sender authored the message.

The GWMail e-mail system will allow messages to the Internet from users at gwu.edu and allow messages to be delivered from the Internet or gwu.edu users to users at gwu.edu. No other mail will be relayed.

The GWMail email system will only receive mail addressed to valid gwu.edu accounts. Only persons with valid gwu.edu accounts may send mail via the GWMail system. Messages that do not originate at gwu.edu or terminate at gwu.edu will not be transmitted through the GWMail system.

### ***Backups***

The GWMail system is backed up each night, with a full or incremental backup. Each night's backup is kept for 10 days.

These backups are used for disaster recovery purposes only. No requests to retrieve e-mail messages from the backups will be granted.

### ***Virus Protection***

The GWMail system has a virus scanner that scans all incoming and outgoing e-mail for viruses, and removes them when found. However, this virus scanner cannot guarantee that all e-mail will be virus-free. Thus, all e-mail users should have their own anti-virus software on their computer, and update that software frequently.

Anti-virus software is available at no charge to members of the GW community. To learn more, visit the ISS Virtual Help Desk at <http://helpdesk.gwu.edu>.

The University is not liable for any damage caused by viruses or any other hostile code delivered through the GWMail system.

## GWMAIL POLICY

### ***Inappropriate Usage***

E-mail users and administrators should only use the e-mail services in an appropriate manner. Inappropriate usage may result in revocation of access to GWMail.

Inappropriate usage includes, but is not limited to:

- Unauthorized attempts to access another's e-mail account
- Transmission of sensitive or proprietary information to unauthorized persons or organizations
- Transmission of obscene or harassing messages to any individual
- Transmission of copyrighted materials in violation of the rights of the copyright holder
- Any illegal or unethical activity or any activity that could adversely affect the University

### ***Privacy and Applicability of Laws and Policies***

This policy clarifies the applicability of law and certain other University policies to electronic mail. Users are reminded that all usage of GW's information technology resources, including electronic mail, is subject to all University policies.

The University encourages the use of electronic mail and respects the privacy of users. It does not wish to inspect or monitor electronic mail routinely or to be the arbiter of its contents. Nonetheless, electronic mail and data stored on the University's network of computers may be accessed by the University for the following purposes:

- Troubleshooting hardware and software problems
- Preventing unauthorized access and system misuse
- Retrieving business related information\*
- Investigating reports of violation of University policy or local, state or federal law\*
- Complying with legal requests for information\*
- Rerouting or disposing of undeliverable mail
- Other purposes deemed necessary by the Office of the Vice President and Chief Information Officer (CIO), with the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel's approval.

\*The system administrator will need approval from The Office of the Vice President and CIO (or someone designated by the Vice President and CIO), and the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel to access specific mail and data for these purposes. The extent of the access will be limited to what is reasonably necessary to acquire the information.

The University may also retrieve electronic mail messages delivered to University account holders, or otherwise prevent distribution of a message to University e-mail accounts, if it is determined that distribution of the message(s) violates local or federal

## GWMAIL POLICY

law, University policy, or places the University at risk of violation of privacy-related laws. The system administrator will need approval from The Office of the Vice President and CIO (or someone designated by the Vice President and CIO), and the Office of the Vice President and General Counsel to retrieve specific mail messages, and the extent of the access will be limited to what is reasonably necessary to retrieve the information.

Individuals' privacy should be preserved. However, there is no expectation of privacy or confidentiality for documents and messages stored on University-owned equipment or systems. Users of electronic mail systems should be aware that in addition to being subject to authorized access, electronic mail in its present form cannot be secured and is vulnerable to unauthorized access and modification by third parties. Receivers of electronic mail documents should check with the purported sender if there is any doubt about the identity of the sender or the authenticity of the contents, as they would with print documents. Users of electronic mail services should be aware that even if the sender and recipient have discarded their copies of an electronic mail record, there might be back-up copies of such electronic mail that can be retrieved.

University electronic mail services may, subject to the above, be used for incidental personal purposes provided such use does not interfere with University operation of information technologies or electronic mail services, burden the University with incremental costs, or interfere with the user's employment or other obligations to the University.

Electronic mail may constitute a public record like other documents subject to disclosure as a result of litigation. However, prior to such disclosure, the University evaluates all requests for information for compliance with applicable law.

### ***Liability***

The University provides the GWMail e-mail service to facilitate the sending and receiving of e-mail within the University community and to the world. Information Systems and Services makes all reasonable effort to ensure that e-mail is sent, received, and stored appropriately.

However, the University provides no assurances that e-mail will be sent or received using the system, and cannot be held liable for missing messages or any consequences of that message not being sent, delivered, or stored.

The University acts as a common carrier of e-mail messages, and does not examine the content of e-mail messages, except as noted above. As such, the University cannot be held liable for the content of any e-mail message sent, received, or stored on the GWMail system, or for any consequences of that message being sent, delivered, or stored. The University is also not liable for any damage caused by viruses or other hostile code delivered through the GWMail system.

## GWMAIL POLICY

### **Mass E-mails**

ISS can send out mass e-mail messages to the entire GW community or certain large subgroups. Mass e-mails should only be used to communicate University sponsored activities, security alerts, policy changes, or information that benefits GW business or academic mission. Mass e-mails should relay time critical, important University information and should be used sparingly.

All mass emails will be sent as Normal unless designated as Emergency status. Emails that are designated as Emergency will follow guidelines for **Alert Level III, Incident Watch** as defined on the GW Campus Advisories web site located at <http://www.gwu.edu/~gwalert/>.

Mass e-mail messages will be processed as soon as possible depending on staff availability and the GWMail system. All requests for mass emails must be made through the ISS Communications Coordinator by e-mail at [isscomm@gwu.edu](mailto:isscomm@gwu.edu), unless designated as an approved Mass Email Interface user. All mass e-mail messages will be sent within three business days. For same day service during the business week, submit your mass email request between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm. If a message is received after 3:00 pm, it will be sent out the next business day, unless designated as Emergency.

All mass e-mail requests must be approved by a University Vice-President. Mass e-mails generated from within ISS regarding ISS systems may be approved by the Vice President and CIO.

Recommendations for approved Mass Email Interface users:

You must be designated as a Mass Email Interface User in order to directly send mass emails to the community. A user will be recommended by the ISS Communications Coordinator and approved by a VP.

There are recommended limitations for Mass Email Interface Users, and overuse can lead to suspension of your access. ISS recommends users not send more than three mass emails per week to community members. Users must also follow guidelines for Email content as defined below in the Email Message section.

---

## **Procedures**

---

### ***LISTSERV Requests***

List owners must be subscribed to the list with a GWMail e-mail account. All LISTSERVS must be owned, wholly or in part, by a member of the GW faculty or staff. Student and student organizations may own lists with a faculty or staff member's sponsorship. ISS reserves the right to hold a message in queue for release if it will disrupt delivery of other mail. In addition, all lists are required to renew subscribers at least once every 6 months. This will be done automatically using LISTSERV's renewal

## GWMAIL POLICY

function. Lists which have been inactive for more than 18 months may be terminated. If a list is reported as having lack of management, ISS will consider the list “abandoned” and will terminate the list.

In order to prevent unsolicited mail being sent to a list and the unauthorized amassing of e-mail addresses, the following keyword options are not permitted: **Send=Public**, **Review=Public**. In addition, lists configured to **Subscription=Open** are required to use the “confirm” option in order to block subscriptions from fraudulent e-mail addresses.

### ***Mass E-mail Requests***

(A summarized version of the Mass E-mail Procedure is available online at <http://iss.gwu.edu/isservices/massemail/>.)

When submitting a mass e-mail request, obtain approval, include the name and title of the approving Vice President and e-mail the final, approved content to the ISS Communications Coordinator at [isscomm@gwu.edu](mailto:isscomm@gwu.edu). ISS will place a standard message at the bottom of each mass e-mail message that identifies the requesting department and the approving VP.

ISS reserves the right to deny any request for a mass e-mail, at the discretion of the Vice President and CIO.

### **Required Information**

The following information must be included in the e-mail requesting a mass e-mail service:

- The name and full title of the approving Vice President;
- Audience to receive e-mail message;
- University department sponsoring the message;
- Return e-mail address for responses;
- Subject line for e-mail;
- Final, approved e-mail message; and
- Date e-mail should be sent.

### **Audience**

All mass e-mail requests must specify an intended audience.

All mass e-mail recipients must have GWMail (@gwu.edu) addresses; ISS will not process mass e-mails to non-GW addresses or to GW systems other than GWMail.

E-mail can be sent to all GWMail accounts, or to one or several of the following groups: Faculty, Staff, Students, Organizations, and Alumni.

To target a mass e-mail to a specific group, such as all seniors, please provide a list of PIDMs (Personal Identification Masters from the Banner system), or e-mail addresses, along with the above required information and content of the e-mail.

## GWMAIL POLICY

### **Return Address**

All mass e-mails should be sent from a valid departmental e-mail address or [note@gwu.edu](mailto:note@gwu.edu). When using a departmental e-mail address, senders must monitor carefully for returned e-mails, auto-responses, and other responses. When a mass e-mail is sent from [note@gwu.edu](mailto:note@gwu.edu), the sender will not see or receive any responses or returned messages.

### **E-mail Message**

- The content of the mass e-mail can be in plain text or submitted formatted as HTML with bolds, italics, or other formatting.
- No file attachments will be transmitted.
- Symbols such as "\*\*\*" can be used to highlight important information if necessary.
- Messages should be kept short and to the point. ISS recommends that all messages are under 250 words.
- Always include contact information in the e-mail.
- All messages must be signed with the name of the department sending the e-mail, and preferably the name of the author.
- ISS will insert a standardized message at the bottom of each mass e-mail, which will read:  
(This message has been sent in accordance with The George Washington University GWMail policy and procedure, available online at <http://policy.gwu.edu>. This message was requested by [*insert name of requesting office*] and was approved by the Vice-President of [*insert VP's Office*])

---

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

---

[GW University Policies](#)

---

### **Contacts/Responsibilities**

---

Policy inquiries	Managing Director of Technology Services (202) 994-5530
Mass e-mails	ISS Communications – <a href="mailto:isscomm@gwu.edu">isscomm@gwu.edu</a>
E-mail Account Requests	<a href="http://helpdesk.gwu.edu">http://helpdesk.gwu.edu</a>
Download Norton Anti-Virus Software	<a href="http://helpdesk.gwu.edu/helpdesk/software/nav/">http://helpdesk.gwu.edu/helpdesk/software/nav/</a>
Report a Security Violation	E-mail <a href="mailto:abuse@gwu.edu">abuse@gwu.edu</a>
General questions	ISS Help Desk (202) 994-5530
LISTSERV questions and Create/Manage Lists	<a href="http://hermes.gwu.edu">http://hermes.gwu.edu</a> ; <a href="mailto:listadm@gwu.edu">listadm@gwu.edu</a>

---

### **Definitions**

---

## GWMAIL POLICY

(All definitions were taken in whole or in part from <http://www.whatis.com>.)

<b>Client</b>	<p>A client is the requesting program or user in a client/server relationship.</p> <p>For example, the user of a Web browser is effectively making client requests for pages from servers all over the Web. The browser itself is a client in its relationship with the computer that is getting and returning the requested HTML file. The computer handling the request and sending back the HTML file is a server.</p>
<b>E-mail</b>	<p>E-mail (electronic mail) is the exchange of computer-stored messages by telecommunication.</p>
<b>GWMail</b>	<p>The name of the University's e-mail system</p>
<b>IMAP</b>	<p>IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol) is a standard protocol for accessing e-mail from your local server. IMAP is a client/server protocol in which e-mail is received and held for you by your Internet server. You can view just the heading and the sender of the letter and then decide whether to download the mail.</p>
<b>LISTSERV (List)</b>	<p>A small program that automatically redistributes e-mail to names on a mailing list. Users can subscribe to a mailing list by sending an e-mail note to a mailing list they learn about; the LISTSERV will automatically add the name and distribute future e-mail postings to every subscriber.</p>
<b>NetID</b>	<p>The University's method of identification of individuals who require access to specific University technical resources, such as GWMail, Research2, ACAD, Blackboard and other systems</p>
<b>POP3 (or POP)</b>	<p>POP3 (or POP) is a protocol in which your mail is saved for you in a single mailbox on the server. When you read your mail, all of it is immediately downloaded to your computer and no longer maintained on the server.</p>
<b>Protocol</b>	<p>A set of rules used when exchanging information between points on a network or over the Internet</p>
<b>Quota</b>	<p>The allotment of space per user on a shared disk or system (specifically <i>disk space quota</i>)</p>
<b>Spam</b>	<p>Spam is unsolicited e-mail. From the sender's point-of-view, it is a form of bulk mail, often to a list obtained from companies that specialize in creating e-mail distribution lists. To the receiver, it usually seems like junk e-mail. It is</p>

## GWMAIL POLICY

roughly equivalent to unsolicited telephone marketing calls except that the user pays for part of the message since everyone shares the cost of maintaining the Internet.

### **Backup**

The act of copying files or databases so that they will be preserved in case of equipment failure or other catastrophe, or the copy itself.

### **Virus**

A virus is a piece of programming code usually disguised as something else that causes some unexpected and usually undesirable event. A virus is often designed so that it is automatically spread to other computer users. Viruses can be transmitted as attachments to an e-mail, as downloads, or be present on a diskette or CD.

---

## **Related Information**

---

[Code of Conduct for Users of Computing Systems and Services](#)

[Information Security Policy](#)

[Net ID Policy](#)

---

## **Who Approved This Policy**

---

Louis H. Katz, Executive Vice President and Treasurer

---

## **History/Revision Dates**

---

**Origination Date:** November 28, 2003

**Last Amended Date:** September 25, 2005

**Next Review Date:** February 28, 2009