



THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON DC

**Responsible University Official:**  
Chief Information Officer  
**Responsible Office:** Division of  
Information Technology  
**Origination Date:** November 28, 2003

## GWMAIL POLICY

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### Policy Statement

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Subject to limited exceptions, all GW students, faculty and staff must create and maintain GWMail electronic mail accounts. GW alumni may create and use GWMail accounts if they wish, and in certain cases GW contractors may be asked to do so.

All GWMail account holders must comply with this policy. Use of a GWMail account to send or receive electronic mail messages through the GWMail system constitutes consent to this policy, to the University's [Code of Conduct for Users of Computing Systems and Services](#), and to the Terms of Service applicable to each account.

Violations of this policy may result in restriction or denial of access to the GWMail system, and to the University's computing systems, services and information technology resources. Violations of this policy may also result in disciplinary action pursuant to other applicable University policies, guidelines, and procedures, including dismissal or separation from the University.

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### Reason for Policy/Purpose

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The GWMail electronic mail system exists to support the University's academic mission and assist in its administrative operations. The GWMail policy governs usage of the GWMail system to help ensure that it serves these purposes effectively. To that end, the policy sets forth certain required procedures pertaining to use of the GWMail system. It identifies the electronic mail protocols the GWMail system supports. It makes clear that GWMail account holders do not have an expectation of personal privacy with respect to e-mail messages transmitted or received through the GWMail system, and explains the right reserved by the University to search, review, monitor and copy those messages. It states that use of the GWMail system is subject to all applicable laws and University policies, and prescribes proper procedures with respect to unsolicited electronic mail, mass electronic mail, LISTSERVS, message relaying, backups, virus protection, inactive accounts and other matters. The policy also provides examples of uses that are considered inappropriate for GWMail accounts.

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## Who Needs to Know This Policy

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Faculty, staff, students, alumni and contractors

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<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Policy Statement .....	1
Reason for Policy/Purpose .....	1
Who Needs to Know This Policy.....	2
Table of Contents .....	2
Policy/Procedures .....	2
Website Address .....	5
Contacts.....	5
Definitions.....	5
Related Information .....	6
Who Approved This Policy .....	6
History/Revision Dates .....	7

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## Policy/Procedures

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### Requirement to Maintain a GWMail E-Mail Account

All students, faculty and staff must create and maintain GWMail electronic mail (“e-mail”) accounts. GW alumni may do so if they wish. GW contractors also may be required to create and maintain GWMail accounts. Upon request, exceptions may be made for employees without regular access to computers.

### Anti-Virus Software Requirement

All GWMail account holders must have anti-virus software installed on their computers and must keep that software up to date. Assistance and further information is available from the University’s Division of Information Technology (IT) ("Division of IT") Support Center.

### E-Mail Messaging Restrictions

The GWMail system will only process e-mail originating from or being delivered to valid GWMail accounts. Only persons with valid GWMail accounts may send or receive e-mail via the GWMail system. It is permissible to forward e-mail from a GWMail account to another e-mail account as long as that account is checked regularly and no confidential or otherwise protected information is transmitted outside the GWMail system. Faculty, staff and contractors must also check with their departments to make sure there are no additional restrictions on the forwarding of e-mail from GWMail accounts.

Disk space quotas are set for all users of the GWMail system. These quotas vary depending on the identity of the account holder and the interface applicable to that account. 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. Further information on disk space quotas is available from the (["Division of IT" Help Desk](#)).

## **Mass E-Mail**

GWMail account holders may send mass e-mails (e-mails directed to large numbers of recipients simultaneously) only to communicate important and time sensitive information regarding University sponsored activities, security alerts, policy changes, or other matters that further the University's academic mission or assists in its administrative operations.

All mass e-mails require advance approval by a University vice president. Following approval, requests for mass e-mails must be sent to [isscomm@gwu.edu](mailto:isscomm@gwu.edu) accompanied by the information set forth at <http://it.gwu.edu/tnav/stayconnected/massreq/>. Mass e-mails generated from within The Division of IT regarding IT systems must be approved by the Chief Information Officer ("CIO"). The Division of IT reserves the right to deny any request for a mass e-mail, at the discretion of the CIO.

All mass e-mails must be sent as "Normal" unless approval for "Emergency" transmission is obtained. E-mails designated as Emergency must follow guidelines for Alert Level III Incident Watch, as defined on the GW Campus Advisories website (<http://www.gwu.edu/~gwalert/>). All mass e-mails must be sent within three (3) business days of approval.

Individuals and groups may be pre-approved by a University vice president or the CIO to send mass e-mails directly to GWMail Account holders. Information about becoming an approved mass e-mail user may be obtained by sending an email to [isscomm@gwu.edu](mailto:isscomm@gwu.edu).

Subject to the foregoing, the GWMail system may not be used to send any unsolicited bulk e-mail messages, including commercial solicitations or any other form of "spam."

## **LISTSERVs**

Sending e-mail to a large number of consenting recipients is best accomplished by using the GW LISTSERV service. Faculty and staff, and student organizations with faculty or staff member sponsorship, may own LISTSERV mailing lists.

It is the responsibility of list owners to manage all administrative tasks associated with the operation of their lists, to clearly define the purpose of the list for list members, and to monitor the list to ensure that its use is consistent with its purpose. List owners may not subscribe individuals who have not requested membership on a list, although schools and academic departments may add their students to a list for educational purposes.

Professors may also require their students join a course list, and home departments may add staff to a list as a condition of employment.

Further information about the LISTSERVs service is available at <http://hermes.gwu.edu>.

### **Inappropriate Usage**

Usage of the GWMail system is subject to all University policies and applicable law. Inappropriate usage may result in revocation of access to the GWMail system and University computing systems, services and information technology resources, and also may result in disciplinary action pursuant to other applicable University policies, guidelines and procedures, including dismissal or separation from the University.

Inappropriate usage includes, but is not limited to:

- Unauthorized attempts to access another person's GWMail account
- Transmission of confidential or otherwise protected information to unauthorized parties
- Transmission of obscene or harassing messages to any individual
- Transmission of material in violation of the rights of copyright holders
- Any activity that is illegal, that violates University policy, or that could adversely affect the University

Subject to the foregoing, students, faculty and staff may use the GWMail system for incidental personal purposes, as long as that use does not interfere with the operation of the GWMail system, hinder the functioning of any University computing system, burden the University with any additional costs, interfere with the user's employment or other obligations to the University, or violate the law or any University policy.

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

Individuals have no right of personal privacy with respect to e-mail messages or attachments they send or receive using the GWMail electronic mail system.

The University may search, review, monitor or copy any e-mail sent to or from a GWMail account for any purpose, including without limitation the following:

- Troubleshooting hardware and software problems
- Preventing unauthorized access and system misuse
- Retrieving business related information
- Investigating possible violations of University policy or local, state or federal law\*
- Complying with legal requests for information\*

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\* The system administrator will need approval from the CIO (or his designee) and the Senior Vice President and General Counsel (or her designee) to access e-mail messages or attachments for these purposes.

- Rerouting or disposing of undeliverable mail
- Other purposes deemed necessary by the CIO, with approval by the Office of the Senior Vice President and General Counsel

The University also may block e-mail messages from being delivered to or distributed by GWMail account holders if the University, in its discretion, believes that delivery or distribution of the message(s) potentially could violate the law or any University policy. The system administrator will need approval from the CIO, or his designee, and the Senior Vice President and General Counsel, or her designee, to block the transmission of e-mail files or data for these purposes.

Users of the GWMail e-mail system should check with senders if there is any doubt about the safety or authenticity of the contents of those documents. In addition, even if the sender and recipient have deleted their copies of an e-mail message, back-up copies may still exist that can be retrieved. E-mail may also, under certain circumstances, be subject to disclosure in connection with litigation.

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## Website Addresses for This Policy

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[GW University Policies](#)

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## Contacts

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Subject	Contact	Telephone / E-mail Address
General questions	<a href="#">("Division of IT")</a> Support Center	(202) 994-5530
Policy inquiries	AVP Division of IT Business Process Mgmt	(202) 994-0102
Mass e-mails	Division of IT Communications Services	<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>
Report a Security Violation		<a href="mailto:abuse@gwu.edu">abuse@gwu.edu</a>
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>

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## Definitions

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**Client** A client is the requesting program or user in a client/server relationship. For example, the user of a Web browser is effectively

making client requests for pages from servers all over the Web. The browser 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.

- GWMail** The name used for all of the University's electronic mail systems. The term includes all forms and interfaces used in providing electronic mail services to students, faculty, staff, alumni and contractors, including Colonial Mail, Google Mail, GroupWise and any other service used by the University.
- LISTSERV** A program that automatically redistributes e-mail to designated e-mail addresses. Users subscribe to a LISTSERV by sending an e-mail to its designated e-mail address. The LISTSERV automatically adds the names and distributes future e-mail postings to them.
- NetID** The University's method of identifying individuals who require access to specific University technical resources. A NetID is the same as an individual's e-mail address.
- Spam** Spam is unsolicited bulk e-mail, often to recipients identified by companies that specialize in creating e-mail distribution lists. To the receiver, spam usually appears to be junk e-mail.
- Virus** A virus is a piece of programming code usually disguised as something else that causes some unexpected and usually undesirable computer event. Viruses can be transmitted as attachments e-mails or in links contained in e-mails.

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## **Related Information**

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

[GW NetID: Individual Accounts Policy](#)

[Information Security Policy](#)

[Personal Use of University Resources Policy](#)

[Division of IT Support Center](#)

Norton Anti-Virus Software: <http://helpdesk.gwu.edu/helpdesk/software/nav/>

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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:** November 28, 2003

**Last Amended Date:** June 30, 2010

**Next Review Date:** July 31, 2012