

University of New Orleans

Acceptable Use Policy for Information Technology

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1. Preamble

Respect the rights and sensibilities of others.

Use that impedes, interferes with, impairs, or otherwise causes harm to the activities of others is prohibited. Harassing or threatening use is prohibited.

Be aware of the legal implications of your computer use.

Violations of law, and/or university contracts are not permitted.

Respect the mission of the University in the larger community.

Use that is inconsistent with the University's non-profit status is not permitted. Violations of external data network policies are not permitted.

Do not harm the integrity of the University's computer systems and networks.

The individual right to privacy may, when personal files may need to be accessed for troubleshooting purposes, be overridden by authorized personnel to protect the integrity of the University's computer systems.

2. Introduction

This document provides guidelines for acceptable use of computer facilities and services at the University of New Orleans. It offers principles to help guide members of the University of New Orleans community, and specific policy statements that serve as reference points. It will be modified as new questions and situations arise.

Some of the guidelines call for respectful and responsible use of the computer networks to protect the rights of individuals. Computer networking has greatly expanded our ability to access and exchange information, requiring more vigilant efforts and perhaps more secure safeguards to protect individuals' rights of privacy. Property as well as privacy rights may be infringed whenever files or data belonging to others, however gained, are used without authorization; moreover, while freedom of inquiry and expression are fundamental principles of academic life, assaults upon the personal integrity of individual members of the academic community and dissemination of offensive materials may undermine the foundations of that community.

Other policies warn against actions that may violate the law: users within the academic community must understand the perils of illegal use, exchange, or display of copyrighted, deceptive, defamatory, or obscene materials on a web page or through other electronic communication channels.

The community at large has rights and expectations that must be considered. When individuals misrepresent either themselves or the University, or when they act by computer in a manner unacceptable within the University or in the larger community, the integrity and mission of the University itself is endangered.

Finally, the guidelines seek to protect the integrity of the University information systems themselves: the computing or networking resources need to be accessible and secure for acceptable uses consistent with the mission of the University; the usurpation of these resources for personal gain or without authorization is unacceptable. Moreover, even the individual right to privacy may, when personal files may need to be accessed for troubleshooting purposes, be overridden by authorized personnel to protect the integrity of the University's computer systems.

3. Reason for the Policy

Information technology (IT), the vast and growing array of computing and electronic data communications facilities and services, is used daily to create, access, examine, store, and distribute material in multiple media and formats. Information technology plays an integral part in the fulfillment of UNO's research, education, administrative, service, and other roles. Users of UNO's IT resources have a responsibility not to abuse those resources and to respect the rights of the members of the community as well as the University itself. This University of New Orleans IT Acceptable Use Policy (the "Policy" or "AUP") provides guidelines for the acceptable use of UNO's IT resources as well as for the University's access to information about and oversight of these resources.

Most IT use parallels familiar activity in other media and formats, making existing University policies important in determining what use is acceptable. Using electronic mail ("email") instead of standard written correspondence, for example, does not fundamentally alter the nature of the communication, nor does it alter the guiding policies. University policies that already govern freedom of expression and related matters in the context of standard written expression govern electronic expression as well. This Policy addresses circumstances that are particular to the IT arena and is intended to augment but not to supersede other relevant University policies.

For statements of other applicable University policies, consult the Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, the Staff Handbook, and the UNO Policy Manual as well as policy manuals and statements issued by each individual college. UNO's Department of University Computing and Communications (UCC) has promulgated policies that govern the use of various IT systems and email services. Other IT service providers at UNO have also adopted policies governing use of systems they manage. Please refer to postings available within each system to identify supplementary, tailored policies that also govern use of those systems. ([Policy Cross-References](#))

4. Purpose

The purpose of this AUP is to ensure an information technology infrastructure that promotes the basic missions of the University in teaching, research, administration, and service. In particular, this Policy aims to promote the following goals:

- To ensure the integrity, reliability, availability, and performance of IT Systems;
- To ensure that use of IT Systems is consistent with the principles, values, laws, and regulations that govern use of other University facilities and services;
- To ensure that IT Systems are used for their intended purposes; and
- To establish processes for addressing policy violations and sanctions for violators.

5. Definitions

IT Systems: These are the computers, terminals, printers, networks, modem banks, online and offline storage media and related equipment, software, and data files that are owned, managed, or maintained by the University of New Orleans. For example, IT Systems include institutional and departmental information systems, faculty research systems, desktop computers, the University's campus network, and University general access computer clusters.

User: A "User" is any person, whether authorized or not, who makes any use of any IT System from any location. For example, Users include a person who accesses IT Systems in a University computer cluster, or via an electronic network.

Systems Authority: While UNO is the legal owner or operator of all IT Systems, it delegates oversight of particular systems to the head of a specific subdivision, department, or office of the University ("Systems Authority"), or to an individual faculty member, in the case of IT systems purchased with research or other funds for which he or she is personally responsible.

Systems Administrator: Systems Authorities may designate another person as "Systems Administrator" to manage the particular system assigned to him or her. Systems Administrators oversee the day-to-day operation of the system and are authorized to determine who is permitted access to particular IT resources.

Certifying Authority: This is the Systems Administrator or other University authority who certifies the appropriateness of an official University document for electronic publication in the course of University business.

Specific Authorization: This means documented permission provided by the applicable Systems Administrator.

6. Scope

This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) applies to all Users of UNO Information Technology (IT) Systems, including but not limited to students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University. It applies to the use of all IT Systems. These include systems, networks, and facilities administered by University Computing and Communications (UCC), as well as those administered by individual colleges, departments, University laboratories, and other University-based entities. This includes the general public.

Use of IT Systems, even when carried out on a privately owned computer that is not managed or maintained by the University of New Orleans, is governed by this Policy.

7. User Responsibilities

1. Users shall be issued accounts for the systems to which they are authorized, and the user accounts will remain active for the period the individual is either employed or enrolled, in good standing, at UNO. Faculty and staff retirees and students who graduate from UNO will be allowed to keep their email account.
2. Proper use of accounts is the responsibility of the individual to whom it has been assigned. User accounts shall not be shared with others, and all account passwords will be kept secret. Users are expected to change their passwords when there is any suspicion of account theft.
3. Virus protection programs must be installed and updated regularly.
4. The unauthorized use of someone else's account shall be considered theft and computer fraud. Users shall not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any IT system.

8. Policy Sections

I. Acceptable use of IT Systems Although this Policy sets forth the general parameters of acceptable use of IT Systems, faculty, students, and staff should consult their respective governing policy manuals for more detailed statements on permitted use and the extent of use that the University considers acceptable in light of their varying roles within the community. IT Systems Authorities or Administrators may elect to impose stricter controls than those required by this Policy. In all cases where the controls are less restrictive than those of this AUP, this AUP applies.

A. Acceptable Use. IT Systems may be used only for their authorized purposes -- that is, to support the research, education, administrative, service, and other functions of the University of New Orleans. The particular purposes of any IT System as well as the nature and scope of authorized, incidental personal use may vary according to the duties and responsibilities of the User.

B. Proper Authorization. Users are entitled to access only those elements of IT Systems that are consistent with their authorization.

C. Prohibited Use. The following categories of use are unacceptable and prohibited:

1. **Use that impedes, interferes with, impairs, or otherwise causes harm to the activities of others.** Users must not deny or interfere with or attempt to deny or interfere with service to other users in any way, including by "resource hogging," misusing mailing lists, propagating "chain letters" or virus hoaxes, "spamming" (spreading email or postings widely and without good purpose), or "bombing" (flooding an individual, group, or system with numerous or large email messages). Knowing or reckless distribution of unwanted mail or other unwanted messages is prohibited. Other behavior that may cause excessive network traffic or computing load is also prohibited.
2. **Use that is inconsistent with the University's non-profit status.** The University is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization and, as such, is subject to specific federal, state, and local laws regarding sources of

income, political activities, use of property, and similar matters. As a result, commercial use of IT Systems for non-UNO purposes is generally prohibited, except if specifically authorized and permitted under University conflict-of-interest, outside employment, and other related policies. Prohibited commercial use does not include communications and exchange of data that furthers the University's educational, administrative, research, and other roles, regardless of whether it has an incidental financial or other benefit to an external organization.

3. Use of IT Systems in a way that suggests **University endorsement of any political candidate or ballot initiative** is also prohibited. Users must refrain from using IT Systems for the purpose of lobbying that connotes University involvement, except for authorized lobbying through or in consultation with the Chancellor's Office.
4. **Harassing or threatening use.** This category includes, for example, discriminatory harassment, display of offensive, sexual material in the workplace and repeated unwelcome contacts with another.
5. **Use damaging the integrity of University or other IT Systems.** This category includes, but is not limited to, the following six activities:
 - a) **Attempts to defeat system security.** Users must not defeat or attempt to defeat any IT System's security – for example, by "cracking" or guessing and applying the identification or password of another User, or compromising room locks or alarm systems. (This provision does not prohibit, however, UCC or Systems Administrators from using security scan programs within the scope of their Systems Authority.)
 - b) **Unauthorized access or use.** The University recognizes the importance of preserving the privacy of Users and data stored in IT systems. Users must honor this principle by neither seeking to obtain unauthorized access to IT Systems, nor permitting or assisting any others in doing the same. For example, a non-UNO organization or individual may not use non-public IT Systems without specific authorization. Privately owned computers may be used to provide public information resources, but such computers may not host sites or services for non-UNO organizations or individuals across the UNO network without specific authorization. Similarly, Users are prohibited from accessing or attempting to access data on IT Systems that they are not authorized to access. Furthermore, Users must not make or attempt to make any deliberate, unauthorized changes to data on an IT System. Users must not intercept or attempt to intercept or access data communications not intended for that user, for example, by "promiscuous" network monitoring, running network sniffers, or otherwise tapping phone or network lines.
 - c) **Disguised use.** Users must not conceal their identity when using IT Systems, except when the option of anonymous access is explicitly authorized. Users are also prohibited from masquerading as or impersonating others or otherwise using a false identity.
 - d) **Distributing computer viruses.** Users must not knowingly distribute or launch computer viruses, worms, or other rogue programs.
 - e) **Modification or removal of data or equipment.** Without specific authorization, Users may not remove or modify any University-owned or administered equipment or data from IT Systems.
 - f) **Use of unauthorized devices.** Without specific authorization, Users must not connect networking equipment (routers, hubs, sniffers, etc.) to the Campus network, nor operate network services software (routing, sniffing, name service, multicast services, etc.) on a computer attached to the network, nor physically or electrically attach any additional device (such as an external disk, printer, or video system) to IT Systems.
6. **Use in violation of law.** Illegal use of IT Systems -- that is, use in violation of civil or criminal law at the federal, state, or local levels -- is prohibited. Examples of such uses are: promoting a pyramid scheme; distributing illegal obscenity; receiving, transmitting, or possessing child pornography; infringing copyrights; and making bomb threats.

With respect to copyright infringement, Users should be aware that copyright law governs (among other activities) the copying, display, and use of software and other works in digital form (text, sound, images, and other multimedia). The law permits use of copyrighted material without authorization from the copyright holder for some educational purposes (protecting certain classroom practices and "fair use," for

example), but an educational purpose does not automatically mean that the use is permitted without authorization.

7. **Use in violation of University contracts.** All use of IT Systems must be consistent with the University's contractual obligations, including limitations defined in software and other licensing agreements.
8. **Use in violation of University policy.** Use in violation of other University policies also violates this AUP. Relevant University policies include, but are not limited to, those regarding sexual harassment and racial and ethnic harassment, as well as University, departmental, and work-unit policies and guidelines regarding incidental personal use of IT Systems.
9. **Use in violation of external data network policies.** Users must observe all applicable policies of external data networks when using such networks.

D. Free Inquiry and Expression. Users of IT Systems may exercise rights of free inquiry and expression consistent with the principles of the Freedom of Expression Policy adopted by UNO and the limits of the law.

E. Personal Account Responsibility. Users are responsible for maintaining the security of their own IT Systems accounts and passwords. Any User changes of password must follow published guidelines for passwords. Accounts and passwords are normally assigned to single Users and are not to be shared with any other person without authorization by the applicable Systems Administrator. Users are presumed to be responsible for any activity carried out under their IT Systems accounts or posted on their personal web pages.

F. Encryption of Data. University faculty and staff, as employees, may encrypt files, documents, and messages for protection against unauthorized disclosure while in storage or in transit. However, such encryption must allow officials, when properly required and authorized, to decrypt the information. A staff member may only encrypt with the permission of his or her supervisor.

G. Responsibility for Content. Official University information may be published in a variety of electronic forms. The Certifying Authority under whose auspices the information is published is responsible for the content of the published document.

Users also are able to publish information on IT Systems or over UNO's networks. Neither UNO nor individual Systems Administrators can screen such privately published material nor can they ensure its accuracy or assume any responsibility for its content. The University will treat any electronic publication provided on or over IT Systems that lacks a Certifying Authority as the private speech of an individual user.

H. Personal Identification. Upon request by a Systems Administrator or other University authority, Users must produce valid University identification.

II. Conditions of University Access to Resources

The University places a high value on privacy and recognizes its critical importance in an academic setting. There are nonetheless circumstances in which, following carefully prescribed processes, the University may determine that certain broad concerns outweigh the value of a User's expectation of privacy and warrant University access to relevant IT Systems without the consent of the User. Those circumstances are discussed below, together with the procedural safeguards established to ensure access is gained only when appropriate.

A. Special Conditions. In accordance with state and federal law, the University may access all aspects of IT Systems, without the consent of the User, in the following circumstances:

1. When necessary to identify or diagnose systems or security vulnerabilities and problems, or otherwise preserve the integrity of the IT Systems; or
2. When required by federal, state, or local law or administrative rules; or
3. When there are reasonable grounds to believe that a violation of law or a significant breach of University policy may have taken place and access and inspection or monitoring may produce evidence related to the misconduct; or

4. When such access to IT Systems is required to carry out essential business functions of the University; or
5. When required to preserve public health and safety.

B. Process. Consistent with the privacy interests of Users, University access without the consent of the User will occur only with the approval of the Provost and cognizant Dean (for faculty users), the Provost (for staff users), the College Dean as appropriate (for student users), or their respective delegates, except when an emergency entry is necessary to preserve the integrity of facilities or to preserve public health and safety. The University, through the Systems Administrators, will log all instances of access without consent. Systems Administrators will also log any emergency entry within their control for subsequent review by the Provost, Dean, or other appropriate University authority. A User will be notified of University access to relevant IT Systems without consent, pursuant to II, [section A \(1-5\)](#) depending on the circumstances, such notification will occur before, during, or after the access, at the University's discretion.

C. User access deactivations. In addition to accessing the IT Systems, the University, through the appropriate Systems Administrator, may deactivate a User's IT privileges, whether or not the User is suspected of any violation of this Policy, when necessary to preserve the integrity of facilities, user services, or data. The Systems Administrator will attempt to notify the User of any such action.

D. Use of security scanning systems. By attaching privately owned personal computers or other IT resources to the University's network, Users consent to University use of scanning programs for security purposes on those resources while attached to the network.

E. Logs. Most IT systems routinely log user actions in order to facilitate recovery from system malfunctions and for other management purposes. All Systems Administrators are required to establish and post policies and procedures concerning logging of User actions, including the extent of individually-identifiable data collection, data security, and data retention.

F. Encrypted material. Encrypted files, documents, and messages may be accessed by the University under the above guidelines. See I - F, above.

III. Enforcement Procedures

A. Complaints of Alleged Violations. An individual who believes that he or she has been harmed by an alleged violation of this Policy may file a complaint in accordance with established University Grievance Procedures (including, where relevant, those procedures for filing complaints of sexual harassment or of racial or ethnic harassment) for students, faculty, and staff. The individual is also encouraged to report the alleged violation to the Systems Authority overseeing the facility most directly involved who must investigate the allegation and (if appropriate) refer the matter to University disciplinary and/or law enforcement authorities.

B. Reporting Observed Violations. If an individual has observed or otherwise is aware of a violation of this Policy, but has not been harmed by the alleged violation, he or she may report any evidence to the Systems Authority overseeing the facility most directly involved, who must investigate the allegation and (if appropriate) refer the matter to University disciplinary and/or law enforcement authorities.

C. Disciplinary Procedures. Alleged violations of this Policy will be pursued in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedures for faculty, staff, and students, as outlined in the Faculty Handbook, the Staff Handbook, the Student Handbook, and other applicable materials. Systems Administrators may participate in the disciplinary proceedings as deemed appropriate by the relevant disciplinary authority. Moreover, at the direction of the appropriate disciplinary authority, Systems Administrators are authorized to investigate alleged violations.

D. Penalties. Individuals found to have violated this Policy may be subject to penalties provided for in other University policies dealing with the underlying conduct. Violators may also face IT-specific penalties, including temporary or permanent reduction or elimination of some or all IT privileges regardless of fees paid. The appropriate penalties shall be determined by the applicable disciplinary authority in consultation with the Systems Administrator.

E. **Legal Liability for Unlawful Use.** In addition to University discipline, Users may be subject to criminal prosecution, civil liability, or both for unlawful use of any IT System.

F. **Appeals.** Users found in violation of this Policy may appeal or request reconsideration of any imposed disciplinary action in accordance with the appeals provisions of the relevant disciplinary procedures.

IV. Policy Development

Policies contained in this AUP were developed using the “best practices” approach recommended by the Louisiana State University System Information Security Plan, [PM-36](#).

This document will be subject to a yearly review under the direction of the Chair of the Strategic Technology Planning and Implementation Group (STPIG).

A. Interpretation

Questions on the interpretation of the AUP should be addressed to the Chair of the STPIG.

B. Review

The University User Policies for Information Technology sub-committee (Sub-committee) will meet at the Chair’s behest for a review of the AUP. Any updates to this document will be developed in the Sub-committee in consultation with the UNO community. These changes will then be presented to the full STPIG for review. Final recommendations from STPIG will be presented to the Provost for approval.

9. Policy Cross-References

The following links are to related online policies and documents:

1. [UCC Policies](#)
2. [UNO Student Handbook](#)
3. [UNO Faculty Handbook](#)
4. [UNO Staff Handbook](#)
5. [UNO Policy Manual](#)
6. [UNO Freedom of Expression Policy](#)
7. [UNO Judicial Code Part 1](#)
8. [UNO Judicial Code Part 2](#)
9. [UNO Student Computer Usage Policy](#)
10. [Digital Millennium Copyright Act](#)
11. [FERPA](#) (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)
12. [Cornell Institute for Computer Policy and Law](#) (ICPL)

This AUP was modeled, with permission, on the Appropriate Use Policy in effect in 2004 at Yale University.