

# Procedure: 3.3.4p (II.C.4.)

## Acceptable Computer and Internet Use

**Revised:** May 17, 2016; February 2, 2012; October 2, 2003

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### I. PURPOSE:

In making decisions regarding access to the Internet and use of its computers, the System considers its own stated educational mission, goals, and objectives. Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation of citizens and future employees. The System expects faculty to blend thoughtful use of the Internet throughout the curriculum and provide guidance and instruction to students in its use. As much as possible, access from technical colleges to Internet resources should be structured in ways that point students to those resources that have been evaluated prior to use. While students shall be able to move beyond those resources to others that have not been previewed by staff, they shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly suited to learning objectives. Students and employees utilizing technical college-provided Internet access are responsible for good behavior on-line just as they are in a classroom or other area of the college.

Using a computer without permission is theft of services and is illegal under state and federal laws. Federal law prohibits misuse of computer resources. In addition, the following specific computer crimes are prohibited by state law in Georgia (O.C.G.A. § 16-9-90 et seq.):

### II. RELATED AUTHORITY:

O.C.G.A. § 20-4-11 – Powers of the Board

O.C.G.A. § 20-4-14 – TCSG Powers and Duties

### III. APPLICABILITY:

All work units and technical colleges associated with the Technical College System of Georgia.

### IV. DEFINITIONS:

**Computer theft** (including theft of computer services, intellectual property such as copyrighted material, and any other property);

**Computer trespass** (unauthorized use of computers to delete or alter data or interfere with others' usage);

**Computer invasion of privacy** (unauthorized access to financial or personal data or the like);

**Computer forgery** (forgery as defined by other laws, but committed on a computer rather than on paper);

**Computer password disclosure** (unauthorized disclosure of a password resulting in damages exceeding \$500 - in practice, this includes any disclosure that requires a system security audit afterward); and

**Misleading transmittal of names or trademarks** (falsely identifying yourself or falsely claiming to speak for a person or organization by using their name, trademark, logo, or seal).

**V. ATTACHMENTS: n/a**

**VI. PROCEDURE:**

Maximum penalties for the first four crimes in the list are a \$50,000 fine and 15 years of imprisonment, plus civil liability. The maximum penalties for computer password disclosure are a \$5,000 fine and 1 year of imprisonment, plus civil liability.

The purpose of technical college-provided Internet access is to facilitate communications in support of research and education. To remain eligible as users, students' use must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the System. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility.

Users should not expect files stored on System or technical college-based computers to be private. Electronic messages and files stored on technical college-based computers shall be treated like other technical college premises that are temporarily assigned for individual use. Administrators may review files and messages in an effort to maintain system integrity and in an effort to insure that users are acting responsibly. Moreover, System and technical college officials shall cooperate with law enforcement officials who are properly authorized to search System and technical college computers and computer systems.

All information created, stored or transmitted by System or technical college computers or networks is subject to monitoring for compliance with applicable laws and policies.

The following uses of System or technical college-provided computers, networks and Internet access are not permitted:

- a. To create, access or transmit sexually explicit, obscene, or pornographic material;
- b. To create, access or transmit material that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or attempts to libel or otherwise defame any person.
- c. To violate any local, state or federal statute;
- d. To vandalize, damage, or disable the property of another individual or organization;
- e. To access another individual's password, materials, information, or files without permission;

- f. To violate copyright or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual or organization in violation of the law, including software piracy;
- g. To conduct private or personal for-profit activities. This includes use for private purposes such as business transactions, private advertising of products or services, and any activity meant to foster personal gain;
- h. To knowingly endanger the security of any System or technical college computer or network;
- i. To willfully interfere with another's authorized computer usage;
- j. To connect any computer to any of the System or technical college networks unless it meets technical and security standards set by the System;
- k. To create, install, or knowingly distribute a computer virus, rootkit, keystroke logger, "Trojan horse," or other surreptitiously destructive program on any System or Technical College computer or network facility, regardless of whether any demonstrable harm results; and
- l. To modify or reconfigure the software or hardware of any Agency computer or Network without proper authorization.
- m. To conduct unauthorized not-for-profit business activities;
- n. To conduct any activity or solicitation for political or religious causes;
- o. To perform any activity that could cause the loss, corruption of, prevention of rightful access to, or unauthorized distribution of Agency data and information; and
- p. To create, access, or participate in online gambling. Occasional access to information or websites of the Georgia Lottery Corporation shall not constitute nor be considered inappropriate use.
- q. to capture and/or record network traffic without authorization

Occasional personal use of internet connectivity and e-mail that do not involve any inappropriate use as described above may occur, if permitted by the college. Any such use should be brief, infrequent, and shall not interfere with User's performance, duties and responsibilities.

Users of System and technical college computers and computer systems are subject to the System's policy on the development of Intellectual Property. Any violation of this policy and rules may result in disciplinary action against the employee or student. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

The System makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, for the computers, computer systems and Internet access it provides. The System shall not be responsible for any damages users suffer, including but not limited to loss of data resulting from delays or interruptions in service. The System shall not be responsible for the accuracy, nature or quality

of information gathered through technical college hard drives or servers; nor for the accuracy, nature or quality of information gathered through technical college-provided Internet access. The System shall not be responsible for personal property used to access its computers or networks or for technical college-provided Internet access. The System shall not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from technical college-provided access to the Internet.

The foregoing standards are equally applicable to employees of the System, wherever housed, and to employees and students of the technical college.

**Penalties**

Violations of these policies incur the same types of disciplinary measures as violations of other System or technical college policies or state or federal laws, including criminal prosecution.

**VII. RECORD RETENTION: n/a**