

Title: Appropriate Use Policy for Information Technology (IT) Resources

1.0 Overview

It is the policy of Middle Georgia State University to provide an environment that encourages the free exchange of ideas and sharing of information. Access to this environment and Middle Georgia State University's information technology (IT) resources is a privilege and must be treated with the highest standard of ethics.

Middle Georgia State University expects all users to use IT resources in a responsible manner, respecting the public trust through which these resources have been provided, the rights and privacy of others, the integrity of facilities and controls, state and Federal laws, and Middle Georgia State University policies and standards.

2.0 Purpose

This policy outlines the standards for appropriate use of Middle Georgia State University IT resources, which include, but are not limited to, equipment, software, networks, data, and telephones whether owned, leased, or otherwise provided by Middle Georgia State University.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all users of Middle Georgia State University IT resources including faculty, staff, students, guests, external organizations and individuals accessing network services, such as the Internet via Middle Georgia State University resources.

4.0 Policy

- *Use only those IT resources for which you have authorization*
- *Protect the access and integrity of IT resources*
- *Abide by applicable local, state, federal laws, University policies and respect the copyrights and intellectual property rights of others, including the legal use of copyrighted material*
- *Use IT resources only for their intended purpose*
- *Respect the privacy and personal rights of others*
- *Do no harm*

5.0 Guidelines

User Responsibilities

Use of Middle Georgia State University IT resources is granted based on acceptance of the following specific responsibilities:

Use only those computing and IT resources for which you have authorization.

For example, it is a violation:

- To use resources you have not been specifically authorized to use
- To use someone else's account and password or share your account and password with someone else
- To access files, data, or processes without authorization
- To purposely look for or exploit security flaws to gain system or data access

Protect the access and integrity of computing and IT resources.

For example, it is a violation:

- To use excessive bandwidth
- To release a virus or a worm that damages or harms a system or Network
- To prevent others from accessing an authorized service
- To send email that may cause problems and disrupt service for other users
- To attempt to deliberately degrade performance or deny service
- To corrupt or misuse information
- To alter or destroy information without authorization

Abide by applicable local, state, federal laws, University policies and respect the copyrights and intellectual property rights of others, including the legal use of copyrighted material.

For example, it is a violation:

- To download, use or distribute copyrighted materials, including pirated software or music or videos or games (aka: illegal peer-to-peer file sharing)
- To make more copies of licensed software than the license allows
- To operate and participate in pyramid schemes
- To upload, download, distribute or possess pornography
- To upload, download, distribute or possess child pornography

Use IT resources only for their intended purpose.

For example, it is a violation:

- To use computing or network resources for advertising or other commercial purposes
- To distribute copyrighted materials without express permission of the copyright holder
- To send forged email
- To misuse Internet Relay Chat (IRC) software to allow users to hide their identity, or to interfere with other systems or users
- To send terrorist threats or "hoax messages"
- To send chain letters
- To intercept or monitor any network communications not intended for you
- To attempt to circumvent security mechanisms
- To use privileged access for other than official duties
- To use former privileges after graduation, transfer or termination, except as stipulated by Middle Georgia State University

Respect the privacy and personal rights of others.

For example, it is a violation:

- To use electronic resources for harassment or stalking other individuals
- To tap a phone line or run a network sniffer or vulnerability scanner without authorization
- To access or attempt to access other individual's password or data without explicit authorization
- To access or copy another user's electronic mail, data, programs, or other files without permission
- To disclose information about students in violation of Middle Georgia State University guidelines

System and Network Administrator Responsibilities

System Administrators and providers of Middle Georgia State University computing and IT resources have the additional responsibility of ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the resources they are managing. Persons in these positions are granted significant trust to use their privileges appropriately for their intended purpose and only when required to maintain the system. Any private information seen in carrying out these duties must be treated in the strictest confidence, unless it relates to a violation or the security of the system.

Security Caveat

Be aware that although computing and IT providers throughout Middle Georgia State University are charged with preserving the integrity and security of resources, security sometimes can be breached through actions beyond their control. Users are therefore urged to take appropriate precautions such as:

- Safeguarding their account and password
- Taking full advantage of file security mechanisms
- Backing up critical data on a regular basis
- Promptly reporting any misuse or violations of the policy
- Using virus scanning software with current updates
- Using personal firewall protection on personal computers
- Installing security patches in a timely manner

Violations

Every user of Middle Georgia State University resources has an obligation to report suspected violations of the Appropriate Use Policy for Computing and IT Resources. Reports should be directed to the institution, unit, center, office, division, department, school, or administrative area responsible for the particular system involved.

6.0 Enforcement

Failure to comply with the appropriate use of these resources threatens the atmosphere for the sharing of information, the free exchange of ideas, and the secure environment for creating and maintaining information property, and subjects one to discipline. Any user of any Middle Georgia State University system found using IT resources for unethical and/or inappropriate practices has violated this policy and is subject to disciplinary proceedings including suspension of system privileges, suspension/expulsion from the institution, termination of employment and/or legal action as may be appropriate.

Although all members of the University system have an expectation of privacy, if a user is suspected of violating this policy, his or her right to privacy may be superseded by Middle Georgia State University's requirement to protect the integrity of IT resources, the rights of all users and the property of the Middle Georgia State University. Middle Georgia State University thus, reserves the right to examine material stored on or transmitted through its resources if there is cause to believe that the standards for appropriate use are being violated by a user or a trespasser onto its systems or networks.

7.0 Revision History

05/11/2011 - Replaces Computer and Network Usage Policy

04/18/2013 - Changed institution name to reflect consolidation

08/4/2015 - Changed institution name to reflect University status