Brock University

Computer Use Policy

Category: Information Technology Services (ITS)
Number: 6.02
Responsibility: Chief Information Officer
Approval: Board of Trustees
Approval Date:
Issue Date: November 2005
Next Review: November 2007

INTRODUCTION

The information technology (IT) resources at Brock University are provided to support research, instruction, administration and other educational pursuits. The continued effective and efficient operation of these shared resources requires respect and consideration for the rights of others and property. This policy is intended to complement existing policies and agreements regarding student, faculty and staff conduct.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is
- To communicate user responsibilities.
- To clarify unacceptable use of IT resources.
- To outline the process used to resolve any allegation of inappropriate use of IT resources.

SCOPE

IT resources include personal computers, workstations, mainframe computers, supercomputers, ORION, file/database/application/e-mail/web servers, network resources, connections to these networks, services offered over these networks, all forms of software, all related peripherals and communication infrastructure. It includes all information in electronic or audio-visual format that any hardware or software make possible the storage and use of such information.

This policy applies to anyone who uses any portion of the IT environment, whether located at the St. Catharines or Hamilton campus or elsewhere. This includes access to the University's networks from any source and any leased properties from which the University operates.

The rapid evolution of computer technology and terminology may render this policy non-comprehensive or incomplete. While every effort will be made to keep the policy current, users must act in accordance with the intent of the policy.

This policy is intended to complement, not detract from any other agreements or policies in place at the University. Where this policy disagrees with collective or other existing agreements, the agreements will take precedence over this policy.

POLICY

1. The University's IT resources must be used ethically, respectfully and lawfully, in accordance with the University's policies, the applicable federal and provincial statutes and regulations. The University understands and is committed to academic freedom.

2. Access to University IT resources is conditional upon user agreement to abide by this policy and acknowledge responsibility for the material created, accessed, displayed, stored, printed, sent or made available to others.

3. Access to IT resources is provided to support the academic and/or administrative mission of the University. Misuse or abuse of IT resources for personal purposes, including commercial use, is unacceptable. Any

personal use of IT resources must be in keeping with the intent of this policy. The University reserves the right to limit, suspend or prohibit access to these resources where necessary to support its mission and policies.

4. User account access and passwords are confidential. Users should not divulge their own password, nor must they attempt to gain access to, intercept, interrupt or use, for any reason, any account or IT resource for which they have not been authorized. Similarly, users should not use, possess, traffic in or permit another individual to have access to a computer password that would enable an individual to gain access to, intercept, interrupt or use, for any reason, any account or IT resource for which they have not been authorized.

5. University IT resources must not be used for mischief. All users of University IT resources are expected to abide by the Electronic Mail Policy. According to the Criminal Code of Canada, mischief includes, but is not limited to the following:

    - destruction or alteration of data,
    - rendering data meaningless, useless or ineffective,
    - obstructing, interrupting or interfering with the lawful use of data,
    - misrepresenting or concealing the content of the messages or the identities in messages,
    - posting or transmitting any virus, worm, or other harmful or debilitating feature in any form, and
    - sending unsolicited and unwelcome e-mails (spam).

6. The University respects intellectual property and does not tolerate plagiarism, or the unauthorized copying of software, including programs, applications, databases and code. Copying of any computer products that are University owned constitutes theft, subject to sanctions and possible criminal prosecution. All users of University IT resources are expected to abide by the Software License Policy.

7. The shared University IT resources require respect and consideration for the user community. All users should avoid unlawful use, possession, and distribution of obscene, profane, or pornographic material. Users should not create, post, transmit or otherwise disseminate content that is unlawful, threatening, harassing, abusive, libelous, slanderous, defamatory or otherwise toxic. Users are advised to refer to the Sexual Harassment Policy, Code of Student Conduct, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Criminal Code of Canada, and other related documents (e.g. collective agreements) for clarification of objectionable, offensive and unlawful conduct.

Investigation and Enforcement

8. The University respects the privacy of authorized users of its IT resources. At the same time, users must be aware that most unencrypted network traffic, including e-mail and internet browsing, is by its nature vulnerable to observation by third parties. The University regularly monitors workstation and network usage for technical purposes including resource allocation to ensure efficient operation of its IT resources. User files will be backed up for operational purposes only (e.g. snap shot taken to be able to restore to point in time in case of an equipment malfunction) but no usage access logging will be performed.

9. The University reserves the right to conduct reasonable investigation of individual user's use of University IT resources when such investigation is:

    - Required by law,
    - Substantially or materially related to a breach of this or any University policy or criminal wrongdoing,
    - Necessary for the preservation of a safe environment for work, research and learning,
    - Necessary for the efficient operation and allocation of IT resources

    In all cases, this information is deemed private and confidential, and treated in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Policy.

10. If a person suspects or becomes aware of a violation of this policy, the person shall report the violation to the appropriate Unit Head or to the Chief Information Officer. A timely investigation of an alleged violation will be conducted to ensure that if a problem does exist, it is addressed and does not reoccur. Violators may have sanctions imposed by the University, be prosecuted under the Criminal Code of Canada or have civil liabilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code filed against them.

11. Anyone found to have used IT resources inappropriately may appeal any internally imposed sanctions according to the established mechanisms.

RELATED POLICIES

Code of Student Conduct
Financial Impropriety
Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection
Integrity in Research and Scholarships
Sexual Harassment
Software License
Electronic Mail

OTHER LINKS

Ontario Human Rights Code   http://192.75-156.68/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90h19_e.htm
Criminal Code of Canada   http://www.efc.ca/pages/law/cc/cc.html
ORION   http://www.orion.on.ca/network/accept.html