

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

Acceptable Computer and Internet Use

Revised: January 16, 2018; May 17, 2016; and February 2, 2012.

Last Reviewed: September 14, 2022; and January 16, 2018.

Adopted: October 2, 2003.



I. PURPOSE:

In making decisions regarding access to the Internet and use of its computers, the System considers its stated educational mission, goals, and objectives. Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparing citizens and future employees. Therefore, 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 to point students to those resources that have been evaluated before use. While students shall be able to move beyond those resources to others that have not been reviewed by staff, they shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources suited to learning objectives. Students and employees utilizing Technical College-provided Internet access are responsible for good behavior online, just as they are in a classroom or other areas 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, computer crimes are prohibited by state law in Georgia (O.C.G.A. § 16-9-90 et seq.).

- a) Computer Theft
- b) Computer Trespass
- c) Computer Invasion of Privacy
- d) Computer Forgery

II. RELATED AUTHORITY:

O.C.G.A. § 20-4-11 – Powers of Board.

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

III. APPLICABILITY:

All work units and Technical Colleges are 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 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.

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.

Malware: malicious software programs and applications designed to damage or cause other unwanted actions on a computer system.

V. ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment: 3.3.4p.a1 TCSG Information Security Standards

VI. PROCEDURE:

The purpose of Technical College-provided computers, computer systems, and Internet access is to facilitate skills development and enhance communication in support of research, education, and workforce development. To remain eligible as users, employees' and students' use must support and be consistent with the System's objectives. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility.

Users should not expect files stored on System or Technical College-based computers or hosted services 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 to maintain system integrity and ensure that users act responsibly. Moreover, System and Technical College officials are expected to cooperate with law enforcement officials 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.

In addition to the computer crimes delineated in O.C.G.A. 16-9-93, 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 unlawful conduct based on race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, genetic information, political affirmation or belief, disabled veteran, a veteran of the Vietnam Era or citizenship status addressed directly to any individual or group that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably and

objectively interfering with that individual or group's: (1) performance, (2) work or educational environment, or (3) ability to participate in an educational program or activity

c. To violate any local, state, or federal statute.

d. To vandalize, damage, or disable the property of another individual or organization.

e. 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 violates 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 knowingly 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," "Malware," or other surreptitiously destructive programs on any System or Technical College computer or network facility, regardless of whether any demonstrable harm results.

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.

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.

r. To knowingly transmit copyrighted material using peer-to-peer file sharing technology.

s. To knowingly evade Internet content filtering or other traffic monitoring tools using VPN, Proxy Services, Tor, or similar technologies.

Occasional personal use of Internet connectivity and e-mail that does not involve inappropriate use as described above may occur if the college permits. However, any such use

should be brief and infrequent and shall not interfere with the 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.

Users of System and Technical College computers and computer systems or hosted services are subject to the System's Information Security Standards. The System and Technical Colleges make no warranties, express or implied, for the computers, computer systems, and Internet access. The System and Technical Colleges shall not be responsible for any damages users suffer, including but not limited to data loss resulting from delays or interruptions in service. The System and Technical Colleges shall not be responsible for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information gathered through System or Technical College-based computer hard drives or servers; nor for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information gathered through System or Technical College-provided Internet access. The System and Technical Colleges shall not be responsible for personal property used to access its computers or networks or provided Internet access. The System and Technical Colleges shall not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from providing access to the Internet.

The preceding standards are equally applicable to employees of the System, wherever housed, and to employees and students at the Technical Colleges.

Penalties

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

VII. RECORD RETENTION:

All related documents generated or collected according to this procedure shall be maintained in a manner consistent with the Georgia Archives' Retention Schedule for State Government Paper and Electronic Records