

OTS Policies

Guidelines for Responsible Computing

Purpose

Towson University provides access to computing and information resources for students, faculty, staff and other authorized users in support of the university's mission of teaching, research and public service. Computing resources include host computer systems, university-sponsored computers and workstations, communication networks, software and electronic files. Access to computing resources carries with it certain responsibilities and should reflect the academic honesty and discipline appropriate for the shared community of network and computer resources. Proper use demonstrates respect for intellectual property, ownership of data, systems security mechanisms and each individual's rights to privacy and to freedom from intimidation, harassment and unwarranted annoyance.

Responsibilities

Use of the university's information technology resources is a privilege. Each user must accept the responsibility for his/her actions and agree to:

- Review and adhere to the [University Acceptable Use Policy \(10.01.02\)](#)
- Act responsibly so as to ensure the integrity and lawful use of computing and information resources
- Respect the rights of others and not threaten, harass, intimidate or engage in unlawful activity
- Abide by all applicable licenses, copyrights, contracts and other restricted or proprietary information
- Understand that system administrators may examine electronic files, electronic mail and printer listings for the purpose of diagnosing and correcting problems with the system
- Acknowledge the right of the university to restrict or rescind computing privileges in accordance with this and other applicable university policies when the user has exhibited inappropriate behavior in the use of computer facilities
- Be considerate in use of shared computing resources. Refrain from monopolizing systems, overloading networks with excessive data, or wasting computer time, connect time, disk space, printer paper, manuals, or other resources.
- Recognize that the same standards of intellectual and academic freedom developed for faculty and student publications in traditional media are applicable to publications in computer media. Web pages, electronic mail and electronic files may not contain copyrighted material without the approval from the owner of the copyright.
- Use appropriate language, behavior and style
- Use TU-provided Web pages only for organizations or individuals that are affiliated with the university. TU-affiliated Web pages may not contain commercial advertising.
- Provide appropriate content. Content served from university hosts must comply with Federal, State and local legal requirements and must not conflict with either the University Guidelines for Responsible Computing or the [Towson University Code of Student Conduct](#).

Examples of Inappropriate Behavior

The following types of activities are examples of behaviors that are unethical, unlawful and/or inappropriate:

- Attempting to alter system, hardware, software or account configurations
- Accessing or monitoring another individual's accounts, files, software, electronic mail or computer resources without the permission of the owner
- Misrepresenting your identity, role or the identity of any other person in any type of electronic communication

- Misrepresenting or implying that the content of a personal home page constitutes the views or policies of the university
- Misusing the university's computing resources so as to reduce their efficiency or to affect access to the detriment of other users
- Producing chain letters or broadcasting messages to individuals or lists of users, or producing any communication which interferes with the work of others
- Breaching or attempting to breach computer security systems, whether with or without malicious intent
- Engaging in any activity that might be harmful to systems or to any stored information such as creating or propagating viruses, worms, Trojan Horses, or other rogue programs; disrupting services; or damaging files
- Violating copyright and/or software license agreements
- Using computing resources to threaten or harass others or transmitting obscene or fraudulent messages
- Using computing resources for commercial or profit-making purposes without the written authorization from the university
- Disobeying lab, system, or university policies, procedures, or protocol
- Installing or operating computer games on university-owned computers for purposes other than academic instruction
- Downloading or posting to university computers, or transporting across university networks, material that is illegal, proprietary, in violation of university contractual agreements; or in violation of university policy
- Violating local, State or Federal laws

How to Report a Violation

Email the OTS Information Security Officer (infosec@towson.edu) with any questions regarding this guideline.

Suspected violations should be reported to the appropriate office. Office of Student Conduct and Civility

Education should be reported to for alleged violations by students, and immediate supervisors should be reported to for alleged violations by faculty and staff.

Enforcement

The university considers any violation of these guidelines to be a serious offense. Violations may result in:

- **Administrative Action**
Violations may result in the revocation or restriction of computer privileges.
- **Disciplinary Action**
Violations may result in disciplinary action outlined in the Code of Student Conduct, applicable faculty and staff handbooks, and university policies and procedures.
- **Legal Action**
Alleged violations may also be referred to local, State and/or Federal authorities.