

Computer Usage Policy for Electronic Information Systems

This document identifies the rights and responsibilities of those who use the electronic information resources at Saint Michael's College. This includes the use of academic and administrative computer systems, the networks, the on-campus information resources including telecommunications systems, and the Internet resources reached through Saint Michael's College systems.

Introduction

The electronic information systems at Saint Michael's College are provided for the purposes of instruction, research, personal development, and administration. This policy informs users of the rights they may expect and their responsibilities. This policy applies to all users of SMC system resources, including those who access these resources from off campus.

Rights

The College seeks to provide an environment in which academic usage has the first priority, and in which there is respect for freedom of inquiry and expression; opposition to censorship; privacy and confidentiality; freedom from sexual harassment; and protection of intellectual property. In particular, the same standards and principles of intellectual and academic freedom already supported by the College in other areas extend to material received through the network. This extends also to publication: the same standards of intellectual and academic freedom developed for faculty and student publication in traditional media are applicable to publication in electronic media.

In addition, respect for law, for due process, and the presumption of innocence are crucial elements of this environment.

Responsibilities

Users are expected to abide by the policies of the College, whose existence makes the use of these resources available. Every user is also expected to be considerate of the rights of other users. Examples of infringements of these principles may include, but are not limited to the following.

- Using the Saint Michael's College system for illegal or criminal purposes.
- Unauthorized use of resources for commercial enterprises.
- Substantially and willfully interfering with another person's authorized use.
- Compromising or attempting to compromise privacy or confidentiality. In particular, attempts to read another person's electronic mail or other protected files will be treated with the utmost seriousness.
- Modifying or attempting to modify system facilities without authorization, including software or hardware installation. This includes the use of the Saint Michael's College system as a staging ground to crack other systems.

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- Obstructing other people's work by consuming gratuitously large amounts of system resource (e.g., network bandwidth or printers). This includes, but is not limited to, game playing or monopolizing information resources for entertainment or personal use.
- Allowing unauthorized access to accounts and passwords.
- Violating license agreements.

Individuals using College information systems resources will be held responsible for their own actions, and will be subject to local, state, and national laws, as well as Saint Michael's College policies.

Privacy and Security

Network and system administrators are expected to treat the contents of electronic files as private and confidential.

However, normal operation and maintenance of the systems requires backup and caching of data and communications, the logging of activity, and the monitoring of general usage patterns. In particular, users should be aware that public lab computers are not a private space and work should not be kept there.

In all matters relating to privacy and security of individual accounts and communications, along with requests for release of information, college personnel will abide by applicable US and Vermont laws, including the Family Educations Rights and Privacy Act or the Government Records Access and Management Act, and by existing College policies, such as are described in the Student Code of Conduct. These generally regard records as private and confidential. However, they allow for examination or disclosure of those records in response to a proper subpoena or court order from external attorneys, police, and/or administrative agencies, and in response to on-campus investigations following established College Security procedures.

Due Process: Complaints and Sanctions

Violations of the policy stated here are treated like any other Saint Michael's College policy violation, as outlined in the Student Handbook and applicable faculty and staff handbooks, and are governed by the same procedures. Notification of possible violations may be made to the Helpdesk at 802.654.2020 or to abuse@smcvt.edu.

In particular, the person against whom the complaint is made will be presumed innocent until proven otherwise. Nonetheless, though status should not be altered pending action on charges, system administrators are authorized to immediately take actions such as locking accounts when the safety and well-being of students, faculty, or College property is at risk. As soon as practical, the Director of Information Technology will be contacted to either authorize or suspend an investigation. The means of investigating may include, but not be limited to, monitoring traffic and files, including the contents thereof. The subject will be notified of the investigation, and of their rights, including the right to College due process, as soon as practical.

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Sanctions for violating this policy can include all regular College sanctions (admonition, warning, reprimand, expulsion, etc.). In addition it can include loss of information systems access.

Open Access

The College is committed to allowing access to all electronic information sources to all members of its community, free of restrictions such as age or residency status. In particular, parents of minors should be aware that in a college setting, serving primarily adults, information resource personnel are not monitoring what their children may view, and no content filters are normally used.

Our policies are designed to reflect current conditions. As conditions change, we will review our policies accordingly; consistent with the goals of the college and subject to the availability of financial resources.