

COMPUTER ETHICS AND NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Introduction

This policy regulates the use of all computing equipment, applications, databases, code, data and network interconnections owned or administrated by Morningside College. These include, but are not limited to, administrative computing resources, office and residence hall personal computers and notebook computers, departmental and campus-wide microcomputer laboratories, network servers and host computers, library computing equipment, terminals, minicomputers, mainframes, associated peripherals such as printers, operating systems, and application software.

Rights and responsibilities

Computers and networks can provide access to resources on and off campus, as well as the ability to communicate with other users worldwide. Such open access is a privilege, and requires that individual users act responsibly. Users must respect the rights of other users, respect the integrity of the systems and related physical resources, and observe all relevant laws, regulations, and contractual obligations.

Students and employees may have rights of access to information about themselves contained in computer files, as specified in federal and state laws. Files may be subject to search under court order. In addition, system administrators may access user files as required to protect the integrity of computer systems. For example, system administrators may access or examine files or accounts that are suspected of unauthorized use or misuse, or that have been corrupted or damaged.

Existing legal context

All existing laws (federal and state) and college regulations and policies apply, including not only those laws and regulations that are specific to computers and networks, but also those that may apply generally to personal conduct.

Misuse of computing, networking, or information resources may result in the loss of computing privileges. Additionally, misuse can be prosecuted under applicable statutes. Users may be held accountable for their conduct under any applicable college policies or procedures. Complaints alleging misuse of computing resources will be directed to those responsible for taking appropriate disciplinary action.

Other organizations operating computing and network facilities that are reachable via the Morningside College network may have their own policies governing the use of those resources. When accessing remote resources from Morningside College facilities, users are responsible for abiding by both the policies set forth in this document and the policies of the other organizations and networks.

Most software is protected by U.S. Copyright Law and illegal reproduction is subject to civil damages and criminal penalties including fines and imprisonment.

Examples of Misuse

Examples of misuse include, but are not limited to, the activities in the following list:

- Using a computer account that you are not authorized to use.
- Obtaining a password for a computer account without the consent of the account owner.
- Allowing someone else to use your account. You are responsible for all use (and misuse) of your account. You must take all reasonable precautions to prevent use of your

account by unauthorized persons, including password maintenance and reporting unauthorized use to the Computer Services Center.

- Using the campus network to gain unauthorized access to any computer system.
- Knowingly or carelessly performing an act which will interfere with the normal operation of computers, terminals, peripherals, or networks.
- Knowingly or carelessly running or installing on any computer system or network, or giving to another user, a program intended to damage or to place excessive load on a computer system or network. This includes, but is not limited to, programs known as computer viruses, Trojan horses, and worms.
- Attempting to circumvent data protection schemes or uncover security loopholes.
- Violating terms of applicable software licensing agreements or copyright laws. This includes the broadcast distribution of copyrighted material from electronic sources.
- Deliberately or negligently wasting computing resources. This includes, but is not limited to, printing multiple copies of a document on a college-owned printer, operating chain e-mail letters, broadcasting an e-mail message to all system users, storing large files on host computers, running programs on host computers that use a disproportionate share of system resources, and failing to signoff from a mailing list you have no interest in following.
- Using electronic mail to harass, annoy, abuse or torment others, threaten violence, or to incite or produce lawless action.
- Masking the identity of an account or machine. This includes, but is not limited, to sending anonymous e-mail.
- Using college-owned computing resources for any activity that is commercial in nature.
- Posting on electronic bulletin boards or Internet services materials that violate existing laws or the College's codes of conduct. This includes, but is not limited to, posting obscene, lewd, or sexually harassing/explicit text, audio, or images to a public online conference; posting of materials that are slanderous or defamatory in nature; harassment based on sex, race, disability, or other protected status.
- Attempting to monitor or tamper with another user's electronic communications; reading, copying, changing, or deleting another user's files or software without the explicit agreement of the owner; reading another person's e-mail.
- Activities will not be considered misuse when authorized by appropriate college officials for security or performance testing.

Enforcement

Penalties for violation of this policy may be imposed under one or more of the following: Morningside College policies and regulations, the laws of the State of Iowa, and the laws of the United States. Penalties may include loss of access to college computing resources, either temporarily or permanently.

Minor infractions of this policy will be handled by Information Services personnel in an informal manner. More serious violations will be referred to the appropriate college authorities for formal investigation and action according to established procedures.