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Title: Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources
Responsible Office: Information Technology

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I. PURPOSE & INTENT

University of South Florida (University/USF) computing and network assets are a vital component of the academic environment, and the use of these resources is always at the discretion of the University and subject to compliance with the law and all University regulations and policies. Each authorized user using these resources must be considerate of other users. The purpose of these resources is solely to support official activities to further the university's mission.

Activities that damage or impede the activities of other users are of particular concern. Such activities are not only discourteous but illegal.

The State of Florida has laws that hold that unauthorized use (including accessing another's user's account) leading to offenses against intellectual property or computer users is a felony. Besides civil penalties that can include imprisonment of up to fifteen (15) years and fines, the University may impose administrative penalties and sanctions against those who violate the law. USF wishes to provide open access to students and faculty with as few restrictions as possible. Courteous and thoughtful computing will minimize the need for regulations and annoying security procedures.

II. DEFINITIONS

- **Digital Asset(s):** Shall be interpreted to include all University computing and telecommunications facilities, equipment, hardware, software, data, systems, networks, and services which are used for the support of the teaching, research, and administrative activities of USF.

III. **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

USF Digital Assets are a vital component of the teaching, research, and business environment. It is the responsibility of all in the USF community to use these resources in a responsible, ethical, and lawful manner. Any member of the USF community who abuses these resources has engaged in unacceptable conduct. Activities which intentionally damage or interfere with the work of other users are especially inappropriate and may constitute violations of state law.

All members of the USF community are responsible for all actions taken using any computer login credentials assigned to them. These credentials (login and password) are considered sensitive and confidential and must never be disclosed.

A. Account Certification Statement

USF Digit Assets users understand that the following activities are forbidden and may be subject to loss of access to computing and network resources, administrative sanctions, and penalties by the university or college, imprisonment, and fines by civil authorities.

USERS WILL NOT:

- **Share Login Credentials:** Users are strictly prohibited from sharing their login credentials with anyone, including other users or organizations. Digital Assets are restricted to authorized users.
- **Unauthorized Access:** Access another user's account, misrepresent one's identity, or allow unauthorized individuals to access a university account is prohibited.
- **Personal Gain:** Using University Digital Assets for private gain or commercial purposes not directly related to the University's mission is strictly forbidden.
- **Disruptive Activities:** Intentionally disrupting legitimate use of Digital Assets by others violates this policy. This includes activities that overload the network.
- **Unsolicited Communications:** Sending unsolicited bulk emails or engaging in mass mailing activities using Digital Assets is prohibited.
- **Illegal Activities:** Using University Digital Assets to engage in any activity that violates local, state, or federal laws, regulations, or contracts is strictly prohibited.
- **Inappropriate Content:** Publishing or transmitting information that is threatening, harassing, abusive, defamatory, or libelous through University Digital Assets is not permitted.
- **Copyright Infringement:** Violating copyright laws by publishing or distributing illegally copied material, including music, movies, software, or

other intellectual property, is prohibited. This includes circumventing software licensing or registration mechanisms.

- Incitement to Violence: Advocating or soliciting violence or criminal behavior through University Digital Assets is a violation of this policy.
- Parental/Guardian Consent: Unemancipated minors must obtain parental consent before using USF Digital Assets.

B. Limited Privacy

While authorized officials do not routinely monitor individual user activity absent cause, USF Digital Assets are not guaranteed to be entirely private. Therefore, users of USF Digital Assets should have no expectation of privacy.

C. Disclosed Information

Users are responsible for maintaining the privacy of their communications and data. Any information they choose to make publicly accessible online is no longer considered private.

D. Authorized Monitoring

USF reserves the right to monitor individual user activity and accounts, including login sessions and communications content, under specific circumstances:

- To safeguard USF's Digital Assets' functionality, integrity, security, or to protect the university from legal liability.
- When reasonable cause exists to suspect a policy violation.
- In the case of unusual or excessive account activity.
- When compelled by law.

For any monitoring of communications beyond publicly available information, legal requirements, or addressing network disruptions, prior authorization from the designated Vice President or designee (in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel) is mandatory.

E. Personal Devices

Authorized users connecting personal devices to USF Digital Assets must comply with the University's information security standards. This includes ensuring their devices have up-to-date operating systems and applications (adequately patched) and are actively protected by current endpoint protection software (antivirus, anti-malware, etc.).

Users are ultimately responsible for the security of their personal devices while connected to USF Digital Assets. They must also ensure their device usage adheres to USF regulations, policies, and standards for proper use and all applicable state and federal laws.

F. Use of Copyrighted Materials

USF adheres to the fair use provisions outlined in the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) 2008. This act allows for using copyrighted materials for educational purposes without explicit permission from the copyright holder, provided specific criteria are met.

However, it is crucial to remember that the use of copyrighted material in all other circumstances must be with permission in accordance with its licensing terms. Unauthorized copying, distribution, or modification of such material is strictly prohibited. This includes exceeding the scope permitted by fair use or violating the terms of a software license agreement.

Engaging in unauthorized copyright infringement can result in legal repercussions for USF and individual users. Users should familiarize themselves with copyright laws and the fair use doctrine to ensure compliance. In case of uncertainty, seeking guidance from USF's library or legal resources is always advisable.

G. Limited Personal Use of USF IT Resources

USF Digital Assets are primarily intended to support the academic and business needs of the University community. Incidental personal use of these resources by faculty and staff, including copiers, fax machines, phones, computers, and email accounts, is permissible only under the following conditions:

- Priority for USF Business: USF Digital Assets must be available for their designated academic or business needs, and personal use should not hinder that primary function.
- Work Performance Maintained: Employees must prioritize their job duties and ensure their personal use does not compromise their work performance. Time spent on personal activities is not considered work time.
- No USF Endorsement: Personal use should not be construed as an endorsement of the activity by USF.
- Compliance with Policies: All personal use must comply with applicable state and federal laws, USF regulation and policies, and established standards.
- Accountability for Usage: USF departments, units, and divisions are responsible for informing users within their areas about these University-wide IT policies.

These departments may establish additional “conditions of use” specific to their areas. Any departmental policies must align with this overarching USF policy but can provide more granular details, guidelines, restrictions, or enforcement

mechanisms relevant to their needs. Departments may also require users to sign these policies and conditions before granting access to resources.

IV. VIOLATIONS

Violations of this policy may lead to suspension of the user's Network Account ID (Netid) or disciplinary action (up to termination or expulsion) to be handled by Student Affairs, deans, or directors as appropriate. In addition, Chapter 815, Florida Statutes, the "Florida Computer Crimes Act," describes offenses that are crimes under Florida law. These offenses include unauthorized modification of programs or data, unauthorized disclosure or use of confidential data, unauthorized access to computer systems or networks, and denial of computer system services to an authorized user. The appropriate law enforcement agencies shall investigate offenses under the Florida Crimes Act. Some offenses may require investigation by federal law enforcement agencies.

HISTORY

Date Approved: Jan. 23, 1995

Substantively Amended: (none)

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