

TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM
SYSTEM OPERATING STANDARD

No. GA.5.2	Page 1 of 13	Effective Date: 05/02/03
DIVISION:	General Administration	
SUBJECT:	Acceptable Use of Computer Resources	
AUTHORITY:	Minute Order #50-03	
PROPOSED BY:	<i>Original Signed by Sammy Rhodes</i>	
TITLE:	Chief Information Officer	Date: 05/02/03
RECOMMENDED BY:	<i>Original Signed by Barbara Selke-Kern</i>	
TITLE:	Executive Vice Chancellor	Date: 05/02/03
APPROVED BY:	<i>Original Signed by Bill Segura</i>	
TITLE:	Chancellor	Date: 05/02/03

STATUS: Approved by MC 4/9/03

HISTORICAL STATUS: Proposed 03/28/03

POLICY

It is the policy of Texas State Technical College to ensure that computer resources are used in an effective, efficient, ethical, and lawful manner.

PERTINENT INFORMATION

Texas State Technical College (TSTC) owns and operates computer resources that are provided for TSTC students, faculty, and staff and other authorized users in support of college business and programs used for administration, education, research, academic development, and public service only. Personal use for profit is specifically prohibited. All authorized users are responsible for seeing that computer resources are used in an effective, efficient, ethical, and lawful manner.

This System Operating Standard (SOS) establishes rules and prohibitions that define acceptable use of these computer resources within TSTC and are in addition to and do not supercede any Texas state or federal laws nor any other TSTC policies regarding confidentiality, information dissemination, or standards of conduct. Unacceptable use is prohibited and is grounds for loss of privileges, termination, and/or legal sanctions under Federal, State, and local law.

Definitions:

Acceptable Use	All computer use activities, contained herein or otherwise that meet the requirements of this SOS and may include other activities that the college deems to be acceptable.
Authorized Users	Any TSTC faculty, staff, student, patron, or guest user who has been authorized to access TSTC computer resources.
Computer Resources	All TSTC computer hardware and software, electronic mail, Internet, telephones, voice mail, telecommunication lines, hubs, routers, switches, and all other computer related peripherals and devices.
Confidential Information	Proprietary in nature and/or relates to TSTC operations and business affairs, including but not limited to, personal information contained in TSTC personnel and student files, i.e., information that is legally protected and not accessible or available to the general public.
Electronic Mail	Electronic mail (E-mail) is the exchange of computer-stored electronic messages usually encoded in ASCII text or HTML.
File Transfer Protocol (ftp)	FTP is an application protocol that uses the Internet's TCP/IP protocols to exchange files between computers on the Internet.
Inappropriate Materials	Unsuitable or improper content not conforming to accepted standards of propriety or taste or any other materials that the college deems inappropriate. The scope of "inappropriate" as used in this context includes legal and illegal materials.
Instant Messaging	Instant messaging (sometimes called IM or IMing) is the ability to easily see whether a chosen friend or co-worker is connected to the Internet for the purpose of exchanging messages.
Internet	The Internet, sometimes called simply "the Net" or the "World Wide Web," is a worldwide system of computer networks in which users at any one

computer can, if they have permission, get information from any other computer and sometimes talk directly to users at other computers.

Public Service

Authorized temporary use of TSTC computer resources extended to individuals and organizations for benevolent purposes, e.g., federal, state and local government entities, other colleges and universities, student clubs, vendors, charities and guest.

System Administrator

A system administrator directs or performs all activities related to maintaining a computer system resource. Responsibilities include software and hardware upgrades and patches and establishment of policies and procedures pertaining to the management, security, maintenance, and use of a computer resource.

Unacceptable Use

All computer use activities, contained herein or otherwise that does not meet the requirement of this SOS and may include other activities that the college deems to be unacceptable.

Usenet/Newsgroups

Usenet is a collection of user-submitted notes or messages on various subjects that are posted to servers on a worldwide network. A newsgroup is a discussion about a particular subject consisting of notes written to a central Internet site and redistributed through Usenet.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Each president has the authority and responsibility to establish college procedures to implement this SOS. The Chancellor has the authority and responsibility to assure college procedures adhere to this SOS.

Only in connection with a legitimate request or investigation approved by the Chancellor and/or his/her designee(s) or Presidents and/or their designee(s), can custodians of TSTC computer resources access or confiscate computer resources of another authorized user for computer forensic analysis. All other access by TSTC computer resource custodians to another authorized user's computer resources will be in the normal course of duty required for the maintenance and support of TSTC computer resources.

OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

I. General Computer Use

A. Audience and Agreement

All authorized users of TSTC computer resources must read, understand, and comply with the operating guidelines outlined in this document, as well as any additional guidelines established by each TSTC College. Users agree to comply with the requirements of this SOS.

B. Rights

TSTC computer resources are owned and operated by TSTC. TSTC reserves all rights, including termination of services to any of these resources without notice. These procedures shall not be construed as a waiver of any rights of TSTC, nor shall they conflict with applicable acts of Law.

C. Privileges

Personal use of allowable TSTC computer resources is a privilege, not a right. As such, this privilege may be revoked at any time and for any reason. Abuse of this privilege may result in remedial and/or corrective measures.

Access and privilege to TSTC computer resources are assigned and managed by the system administrators of specific individual systems. Eligible individuals may become authorized users of a resource and be granted appropriate access and privileges by following the approval steps prescribed for that resource.

D. Responsibilities

Authorized users are responsible for maintaining the following.

1. Many of TSTC computer resources provide access to outside networks, both public and private, which furnish electronic mail, information services, newsgroups, conferences, etc. Users are advised that they may encounter material that may be considered offensive or objectionable in nature or content. All users of TSTC computer resources agree that TSTC's role in managing these computer resources is only as an information carrier, and that they will never consider transmission through these resources as an endorsement of said transmission by TSTC. Users are further advised that TSTC does not assume responsibility for the contents of any of these outside networks.
2. Authorized users may not, under any circumstances, transfer or confer these privileges to other individuals. Nor shall other users use any account

assigned to another user without written permission from the system administrator. The authorized user is responsible for the proper use of computer resources, including any password protection.

3. Any user who uses the college's computer resource to harass or make defamatory remarks shall bear full responsibility for his or her actions.
4. Authorized users agree to comply with the acceptable use guidelines for whichever outside networks or services he/she may access through TSTC resources. Further, the user agrees to follow proper etiquette on outside networks.
5. The authorized user agrees never to attempt to transmit, or cause to be transmitted, any message in which the origination is deliberately misleading.
6. Authorized user agrees that, in the unlikely event that someone does transmit, or cause to be transmitted, a message that is inconsistent with an environment conducive to learning or with a misleading origination, the person who performed the transmission will be solely accountable for the message, not TSTC, which is acting solely as the information carrier.
7. Authorized users agree never to use a computer resource to perform an illegal or malicious act. Any attempts to alter the level of access to which he or she is authorized, attempts to deprive other authorized users of resources, unauthorized scanning of computer or network resources, or vandalism shall be regarded as malicious and may be treated as an illegal act.
8. Any authorized user who finds that security has been compromised on any computer resource is required to report said compromise to respective college official or system administrator.
9. Authorized users are responsible for backup of data that resides on the individual desktop hard disk.

E. Accounts

An account assigned to an individual must not be used by others without written permission from the system administrator. The individual is responsible for the proper use of TSTC accounts, including proper password protection.

F. Confidentiality

TSTC reserves the right to access all information stored on college computer resources without notice. Every effort will be made to insure the privacy of a users files but nothing herein creates a right to privacy.

G. System Usage

Computer, electronic mail, and Internet resources are for college-related activities; however, brief and occasional usage of a personal nature may be permitted. Fraudulent, harassing, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate messages and/or materials are not to be sent or stored.

H. System Performance

No one may deliberately attempt to degrade the performance of a computer resource or to deprive authorized personnel access to any college computer resource.

I. Unauthorized Access

Any potential weakness in computer security or knowledge of an unauthorized password may not be used to damage computer resources, obtain extra resources, take resources from another user, gain access to computer resources, or use computer resources for which proper authorization has not been given.

J. Copyright

Computer software of any nature protected by copyright is not to be copied from, into, or by using campus computer resources, except as permitted by law or by the contract with the owner of the copyright. This means that such software may only be copied in order to make back-up copies, if permitted by the copyright owner. The number of copies and distribution of copies may not be done in such a way that the number of simultaneous authorized users in a department exceeds the number of original copies purchased by that department.

K. Violations

An individual's computer use privileges may be suspended immediately upon the discovery of a possible violation of this SOS. Violations of this SOS will be dealt with in the same manner as violations of other college SOS's and may result in disciplinary review. In such a review, the full range of disciplinary sanctions is available including the loss of computer use privileges, dismissal from the college, and legal action. Violations of some of the above policies may constitute a criminal offense. All authorized users of TSTC resources are advised to report any suspected, accidental, or intentional breach of this SOS to their respective

Departmental Supervisor, Dean, or Vice President. Suspected violations will be confidentially reported to the appropriate system administrator.

L. Additional Guidelines

System administrators will establish more detailed guidelines, as needed, for specific computer resources and networks. These guidelines will cover such issues as disk space, responsibility for account approval, and other items related to administering the computer resources.

II. Electronic Mail

A. General Guidelines for Electronic Mail

1. E-mail should be used only for legitimate state business and educational-related activities; however, brief and occasional E-mail messages of a personal nature may be sent and received.
2. Departmental Supervisors, Deans, and Vice Presidents are responsible for advising their respective authorized users to keep in mind that all E-mail can be recorded and stored along with the source and the destination.
3. Authorized users should have no expectation of privacy regarding E-mail. TSTC has the ability and the right to access and view E-mail and to take the appropriate remedial and/or corrective action to assure that TSTC E-mail resources are devoted to maintaining the highest levels of productivity.
4. Recorded E-mail messages are the property of TSTC. Thus, recorded E-mail messages are subject to the requirements of the Texas Public Information Act and the laws applicable to Texas state records retention.
5. Authorized users should be aware that when sending an E-mail message of a personal nature there is always the danger of their words being interpreted as official TSTC policy or opinion. Therefore, when users send a personal E-mail, especially if the content of the E-mail could be interpreted as an official TSTC statement, the user should use the following disclaimer at the end of the message: "This E-mail contains the thoughts and opinions of (authorized user's name) and may not represent official TSTC policy." Note that this disclaimer is not applicable for faculty and staff to use in normal school business communications.

B. Restrictions Regarding Electronic Mail Use

1. Personal use of E-mail should be limited, i.e., during lunch or other breaks or during limited periods before and after regularly scheduled working hours and/or scheduled class hours.
2. Authorized users are strictly prohibited from sending harassing and/or obscene messages, either to other TSTC employees or to anyone else.
3. Racist, sexist, threatening, obscene, or other legally and/or otherwise objectionable language, graphics, material, or content is strictly prohibited.
4. E-mail may not be used for any personal monetary interests or gain.
5. Users may not subscribe to E-mail mailing lists and/or E-mail notification services strictly for personal use.
6. Personal E-mail should not cause the state of Texas or TSTC to incur a direct cost or other unauthorized cost in addition to the general overhead of E-mail. Consequently, authorized users receiving personal E-mail should read it and then delete it immediately. No storage or printing of personal E-mail is permitted.
7. To reduce the possibility of E-mail being misdirected, it should be addressed properly and double-checked prior to sending.
8. Messages marked "confidential" may not be forwarded without consent of the sender.
9. Authorized users may not transmit any TSTC confidential information via E-mail without permission of the appropriate college officials.

III. The Internet

A. General Guidelines for Internet Use

1. Prior to using information for business and/or educational purposes, authorized users must verify that the information obtained from the Internet is from an official, reliable source.
2. TSTC web sites may not contain any material that is protected by copyrights, permission licenses, trademark licenses, etc., unless all necessary rights have been properly obtained in writing from the appropriate owner or licensor. The burden of proof of permission will reside with the department, authorized users that publishes the material. Similarly, no protected web content may be cross-referenced (via a

"hotlink") in a Website being created for TSTC without first obtaining written permission of the owner of the site to be referenced.

3. TSTC specifically prohibits the use of the Internet or other electronic resources or equipment to access or transmit sexually oriented or any inappropriate materials.
4. Authorized users need to keep in mind that all Internet usage can be recorded and stored along with the source and the destination.
5. Authorized users should have no expectation of privacy with regard to Internet use. TSTC has the ability and the right to view all users' usage patterns and to take the appropriate remedial and/or corrective action to assure that TSTC Internet resources are devoted to maintaining the highest levels of productivity.
6. The Internet path record is the property of TSTC and, therefore, the taxpayers of the State of Texas. Such information is subject to the Texas Public Information Act and the laws applicable to Texas state records retention.
7. Departmental Supervisors, Deans, and Vice Presidents should work with their respective authorized users in order to determine the appropriateness of using the Internet for professional activities and career development.
8. Authorized users using the Internet should identify themselves honestly, accurately, and completely, including their TSTC affiliation and function where requested, when providing identification information.
9. Only those TSTC employees or administrative personnel who are expressly authorized to speak to the media or to the public on behalf of TSTC may represent TSTC in any newsgroup or chat room. When authorized users who do not have authorization to speak to the media or to the public on behalf of TSTC participate in newsgroups or chat rooms in the course of business or in connection with classroom curricula, must do so strictly as individuals speaking for themselves; when possible, they should include a disclaimer in their comments which states: "These comments are the thoughts and opinions of (authorized user's name) and do not represent official TSTC policy."

B. Restrictions Regarding Internet Use

1. Personal use of the Internet should be limited, i.e., during lunch or other breaks or during limited periods before and after the regularly scheduled working hours and/or regularly scheduled class hours.

2. Accessing, posting, or sharing any racist, sexist, threatening, obscene, or other legally and/or otherwise objectionable language, graphics, materials, or content, e.g., visual, textual, or auditory, is strictly prohibited.
3. The Internet may not be used for any personal monetary interests or gain.
4. Authorized users may not subscribe to electronic mail distribution services strictly for personal use and may not participate in electronic discussion groups, e.g., list server, Usenet, newsgroups, etc., for personal purposes.
5. Personal use of the Internet should not cause the State of Texas or TSTC to incur a direct cost in addition to the general overhead of an Internet connection. Consequently, authorized users are not permitted to store or print personal Internet material.
6. Authorized users must not intentionally use Internet resources to disable, impair, or overload performance of any TSTC or other computer resource, or to circumvent any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user or computer resource.
7. Authorized users may not transmit any TSTC confidential information over the Internet without written permission from the appropriate college official.

C. Usenet Newsgroups, Instant Messaging, and Chat

Use of Usenet newsgroups or other topical discussion groups is subject to similar restrictions as applied to general computer use, e.g., appropriateness of accessed content and use of copyrighted or unverified materials, as well as the following.

1. Authorized users must always state that any personal opinions expressed in a discussion group posting are not those of TSTC.
2. Authorized users should not post any message to a discussion group directly critical of TSTC, its affiliates, employees, students, services, or policies.
3. Authorized users may not transmit any TSTC confidential information without written permission from the appropriate college official.
4. Discussion groups typically have rules of on-line etiquette, or "netiquette". Authorized users should be aware that extreme breaches of etiquette could generate uninvited responses against TSTC's computer resources, network, and general business. In all TSTC business, authorized users are expected to observe the rules of "netiquette" and to post only opinions and statements that are appropriate to the particular topic of the newsgroup.

D. File Transfers

File Transfer Protocol (ftp), which is often integrated into Internet use, is a quick and easy means of transferring files such as documents, programs, and images to and from remote computers. In using ftp, file sharing, or other file retrieval methods includes but not limited to the following restrictions:

1. To protect TSTC from copyright infringement acts and other damage, authorized users may not download and/or save any material from any on-line service however retrieved unless: (a) the source is clearly official, (b) the material is legally permitted to be downloaded without violation of copyright or trademark, and (c) all downloaded material is checked immediately for computer viruses and other damaging elements.
2. Authorized users should be encouraged to schedule any large permitted downloads for after business hours, in order to save resources and to speed access.

E. Prohibited Use

TSTC specifically prohibits using equipment or on-line access provided by TSTC for any civilly unlawful or criminally illegal purpose, whether in the course of business or otherwise, including but not limited to the following:

1. Gaining unauthorized access to or intentionally damaging other computer resources or networks or the information contained within them.
2. Unauthorized probing and/or scanning of networks.
3. Committing criminal acts of any kind, including but not limited to, industrial espionage and/or academic dishonesty, i.e., plagiarism, cheating, etc.
4. Distributing or obtaining illegally copied software, programs, games, graphics, sounds, MP3, music, etc.
5. Sending harassing, obscene, threatening, or otherwise inappropriate E-mail messages or content.
6. Utilizing Internet relay chat or any real time chat capabilities for personal "conversations," particularly of an obscene or offensive nature.
7. Attacking the security of network systems or breaching security by intentionally or knowingly giving out any passwords.

8. Modifying or divulging private and/or confidential information such as file or E-mail content of other users.
9. Modifying or destroying TSTC data or job-related data of a TSTC employee or academic/course-related data of a TSTC student.
10. Forging, fraudulently altering, or otherwise willfully falsifying electronic mail headers.
11. Distributing unsolicited advertising.
12. Propagating computer worms or viruses.
13. Distributing chain letters.
14. Downloading illegal or inappropriate materials from any source to a TSTC computer.
15. Displaying illegal or inappropriate material through a TSTC computer.
16. Electronically distributing or posting copyrighted material, trademarked items, and/or trade secrets in violation of registrations, license restrictions, and/or contractual agreements.
17. Using electronic communications resources (E-mail and Internet) to hoard, damage, or otherwise interfere with instructional resources accessible electronically.
18. Disproportionately using system resources, resulting in system slowdowns and/or system crashes.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Effective performance relative to this SOS will be assessed utilizing the following indicators.

1. Corresponding College Operating Procedures (COP) are developed and implemented.
2. Designee(s) are appointed to ensure SOS compliance.
3. SOS operating requirements are disseminated to authorized users.
4. Established procedures to monitor SOS requirements.
5. Documentation of violation incidents.

COLLEGE OPERATING PROCEDURE

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OFFICE OF RESPONSIBILITY:		
APPROVED BY:		
TITLE:		Date
FORWARDED TO SYSTEM OFFICE ON		