

Appropriate Use of Technological and Information Resources

Collin County Community College District Board Approved 6/27/00

Definition

Technological and information resources are defined to include data, records, software, facilities, equipment, storage media, networks and network services, remote access and electronic voice, video, and multimedia communications.

Policy

Collin technological and information resources are provided to allow faculty, staff, and students to pursue the central educational mission of Collin and are to be used to the extent that they promote that mission -- either directly in teaching and research or indirectly in supporting the offices that maintain Collin operations. Incidental personal use that does not otherwise violate this policy or have an adverse effect on college resources is permitted. Technological and information resources are to be accessed and utilized in an ethical manner consistent with the institution's core values, which include a passion for learning, service and involvement, creativity and innovation, academic excellence, dignity and respect, and integrity. All users of technological and information resources are to adhere to legal and professional standards, and to support the mission, and to act in the best interests of Collin.

All users of technological and information resources are responsible for the protection of Collin assets and for the accuracy, integrity, and confidentiality of the information to which they have access. Resources are not to be abused or employed in such a way as to interfere with, or cause harm or damage to, another person, institution, or company within or outside Collin. While Collin encourages the exploration of educational and scholarly interests through the use of its technological resources, respect for the rights and privacy of others must be observed. Those who are authorized to access confidential files must respect the privacy rights of others and use data only for legitimate academic or administrative purposes.

All users of Collin technology resources are to comply with the following policies, procedures, and security controls.

Access

Many of the technological and information resources of Collin may be accessed by all employees and students of Collin and by the public as well.

However, access to some resources is restricted. The appropriate administrators determine and authorize the appropriate degree of access.

Users are to take precautions to prevent the unauthorized use of their access codes. In choosing access codes, users are to avoid the use of common words, proper names, readily associated nicknames or initials, and any other letter and/or number sequences that might easily be guessed. Users will be held accountable for all actions performed under their access codes, including those performed by other individuals as a result of user negligence in protecting the codes. Users are responsible for changing access codes on a regular basis. If access codes become compromised, users are to change them immediately.

Users are not to attempt to access, search, or copy technological and information resources without the proper authorization. No one is to use another individual's account without permission, and active sessions are not to be left unattended. The provision of false or misleading information in order to gain access to technological and information resources is prohibited. Users are not to test or attempt to compromise internal controls, even for purposes of systems improvement. Such actions require the advance, written approval of the authorized administrator, or must be included among the security evaluation responsibilities of one's position. Violations are to be reported to the Chief Information Systems Officer in the Office of Information Technology.

Protecting Confidentiality

No user is to disclose confidential information unless disclosure is a normal requirement of that user's position and has been so authorized. All users with access to confidential data are to safeguard the accuracy, integrity, and confidentiality of that data by taking precautions and performing office procedures necessary to ensure that no unauthorized disclosure of confidential data occurs. Such precautions and procedures include the secure storage of data backups and the protection of sensitive data with access codes. (For information regarding the confidentiality of student educational records, please refer to the Student Handbook or contact the Registrar.)

Privacy

For purposes of this policy, privacy is defined as the right of an individual or an organization to create, maintain, send, and receive electronic data, software, and communications files that are safe from examination and disclosure by others. Collin recognizes that individuals have a substantial interest in and reasonable expectation of privacy. Accordingly, Collin respects the privacy rights of all users of Collin technology resources.

Collin will not monitor users' private electronic data, software, and communications files as a routine matter. Users should note that some electronic files are copied to backups and stored for indefinite periods in centralized locations. In such instances, user deletion of an electronic file, such as an e-mail message, may not delete a previously archived copy of that file.

It is a violation of Collin policy for any member of the Collin community to engage in electronic "snooping," or to use technological resources for the purpose of satisfying idle curiosity about the affairs of others, with no substantial business purpose for obtaining access to such files.

Collin reserves the right to access and to disclose the contents of an individual's electronic data, software, and communications files, but will do so, after obtaining the proper approvals, only when a legitimate need exists and the urgency of the need is sufficiently strong to offset Collin's commitment to honor the individual's privacy. Such grounds might include, but are not limited to: (1) maintaining system integrity (e.g., tracking viruses); (2) protecting system security; (3) investigating indications of impropriety; (4) protecting the Collin's property rights; and (5) meeting legal obligations (e.g., subpoenas and open records requests).

Copyright Issues

Copyright is a form of protection the law provides to the authors of "original works of authorship" for their intellectual works that are "fixed in any tangible medium of expression," both published and unpublished (Title 17, United States Code). It is illegal to violate any of the rights provided by the law to the owner of a copyright. Collin respects the ownership of intellectual material governed by copyright laws. All users of Collin technology resources are to comply with the copyright laws and the provisions of the licensing agreements that apply to software; printed and electronic materials, including documentation, graphics, photographs, multimedia, including

musical works, video productions, sound recordings, and dramatic works; and all other technological resources licensed and/or purchased by Collin or accessible over network resources provided by Collin. Individual author, publisher, patent holder, and manufacturer agreements are to be reviewed for specific stipulations.

In compliance with the requirements of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 (DMCA), any user of Collin technology resources who violates the digital copyright laws for the first time will be reminded of the laws and the software or licensing violations will be removed. A second violation will result in removing the software or licensing violations, retraining of the user in copyright procedures and taking appropriate disciplinary action. A third violation will require Collin to remove the user's network and Internet access and take further disciplinary action which may include termination of Collin employment or student status.

All technological resources developed by Collin employees, students, and contractors for use by Collin or as part of their normal employment activities are considered "works for hire." As such, Collin is considered the "author" and owner of these resources. (For information regarding Intellectual Property Rights, refer to the Faculty and Staff Handbook.)

Integrity and Protection of Technological and Information Resources

Viruses

It is the responsibility of the user to ensure that any imported or exported executable code or data are free of any destructive code, such as a virus. To this end every precaution is to be taken by the user, and the Office of Information Technology is to be consulted for related information and software.

Backups

It is the responsibility of the appropriate administrator or network administrator to ensure that appropriate procedures and resources are in place to backup data on a regular basis. Backups are to be stored in a location that is physically secure to protect the confidentiality of the data. It is the responsibility of the individual user to perform any actions necessary to comply with these procedures.

Physical Security

All users are responsible for the physical security of their technological and information resources. Administrators are to help ensure physical security by instituting procedures for the use of locked doors and/or for the use of the security devices made available by Collin for the protection of equipment. To avoid loss by fire or theft, backups of important data are not to be stored in the same location as the originals.

Adequate power regulators and surge suppressers are to be used.

Collin Property

Technological and information resources that are the property of Collin are not to be copied, altered, manipulated, transferred, retained, or removed from campus without written authorization from the appropriate administrator. The location of each physical resource is to be entered in the Collin Capital Equipment Inventory System and updated as necessary.

Personal Use of College Technological Resources

Authorization for the personal use of Collin technological resources by employees is to be determined on an individual basis by, and at the discretion of, the appropriate administrator. The use of Collin technological resources, including the network, for a revenue generating activity that benefits an individual employee is strictly prohibited. Personal telephones and data connections in student housing are considered to be part of the private residence. Student use of these and other Collin technological resources that intrudes on general Collin use or that utilizes significant resources is prohibited.

Misuse of Technological and Information Resources

The use of Collin technological and information resources, and the resources themselves, are not to be abused in any way. Users are not to attempt to alter the restrictions associated with their accounts or to attempt to breach internal or external security systems. Moreover, users are not to impersonate other individuals or to misrepresent themselves in any way when using Collin technological resources.

Users of network resources are prohibited from engaging in any activity that is proscribed by federal and/or state law. In addition, the network is not to be used for criminal purposes or, for example, to post another individual's credit card numbers or personal access codes. External networks (e.g., NEXUS, the Internet, and bulletin boards) are also to be used in an ethical, responsible, and courteous manner, and all users are to adhere to the policies of these services.

Collin technological and information resources are not to be used in a manner that is invasive or that diminishes their efficiency. One example of such usage involves the broadcast function. Although current technology enables users to broadcast messages to all members of the Collin community simultaneously, the use of this technology is restricted to official Collin activities. Any non-work related broadcasts of general interest to the college community (such as birth and wedding announcements) are to be posted to the Collin General Information GroupWise folder. Notices involving monetary transactions or those that are inappropriate or illegal are not to be posted using college technological or information resources as defined in this policy.

Inappropriate Material

Users are to exercise caution and good judgment in accessing material using Collin network resources. Material which includes language and actions that would constitute a hate crime (including language that is racist or anti-Semitic, etc.) or fighting language, or visual material that creates a hostile working environment should be accessed only for legitimate academic and administrative purposes, and in an environment and manner that will not negatively affect third parties, including printing such information on public printers or forwarding it to others without their consent.

Communications from users of Collin technology resources are to reflect civility and our core values, which include a passion for learning, service and involvement, creativity and innovation, academic excellence, dignity and respect, and integrity. Therefore, the use of Collin technological resources for creating, viewing or sending nuisance, harassing, or pornographic materials or messages is prohibited. The determination of what is pornographic or what constitutes a hate crime, fighting words or visual material that creates a hostile working environment is within the sole discretion of Collin for application of the college's disciplinary policy.

Reporting Violations

Violations of this policy are to be reported to the appropriate supervisor, director, dean or other responsible person. Depending on the nature of the violation, the appropriate administrator may include the responsible Vice President or Provost, the Chief Information Systems Officer, the Human Resources Director or the Internal Auditor.

Alleged violations will be investigated and, if substantiated, addressed in accordance with appropriate college performance documentation processes.

Collin will consider the intent, effect, and seriousness of the incident in levying sanctions for violations of this policy. Any person who engages in any kind of computer or systems misuse as described in this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including the loss of computer privileges, suspension, and/or termination from Collin, and appropriate criminal prosecution, if warranted, under the applicable state and/or federal laws. Whenever Collin deems it appropriate, restitution may be sought for any financial losses sustained by Collin or by others as a direct result of the misuse.