



## Computer Technology Acceptable Use Policy 1700-0917

Individuals are fully responsible for their own actions while using Athens State University's "computer technology" (defined as University computers and computer-related equipment, programs, supplies, and network communications, including Internet access gained through the University's computer network). Users must respect the privacy and rights of others, and the integrity of both the hardware and software being used. Accordingly, users must assume responsibility for making the best possible use of access privileges and for not abusing them.

1. **Limited Access:** The University reserves the right to limit the access of any and all employees to certain software programs or directories. Each user is provided with a certain access level. A user may not access a computer without authorization or exceed authorized access. A user's activity is restricted to access of only those programs or directories in that user's respective access level. Likewise, a user may not obtain access to another level by means of another user's access. Any user who exceeds their respective level, assists another user to gain access to an otherwise inaccessible level, or allows another user to gain access to an otherwise inaccessible level will be held accountable for the violation of this policy. A user may not continue to enter an access level which was previously assigned to the user, but which has since been suspended, revoked, or otherwise continued.

No user may knowingly:

- a. Use either University computer technology or personal technology to "break into" or "hack into" University or other computers and storage devices for the purpose of reading, copying, deleting, modifying or distributing data and/or information of others, or any other purpose.
  - b. give passwords, access codes or other security level access information to others.
  - c. share personal electronic mail (e-mail) accounts.
2. **Acceptable Use:** It is acceptable to use University computer technology for purposes relating directly to education, educational research, and administration of the University.  
Examples of acceptable use are:
    - a. Using the software/hardware only in the condition and settings provided by the University. User may not modify software settings, to add or delete hardware components or modify software features, unless so instructed by appropriate University officials.
    - b. Using the network for the purpose of instructional support. This may include class assignments, research, skill development, and/or the production of materials used in the educational process.

- 3. Unacceptable Use:** It is unacceptable to use University computer technology for any illegal purpose or to interfere with or disrupt other users, services or equipment. Such unacceptable use includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- a. Engage in activities to damage or disrupt computer, computer system, network, information, data, or a program, by such acts as virus creation and propagation, wasting system resources, or overloading networks with excessive data.
  - b. Engage in activities for the purpose of promoting personal gain and or profit or use of University technology for organizations other than Athens State University.
  - c. Engage in any activity which is in violation of the Code of Alabama (1975) §§ 36-25-1 through 36-25-30, as amended, (the "State Ethics Law"), or which, in the opinion of the University administration, maybe contrary to such law.
  - d. Use of any computer technology in a manner that violates patent protection or license agreements.
  - e. Engage in any activity that violates any and all copyright law. Such activity may include utilizing University technology to copy and/or distribute copyrighted materials of any type that the user does not have a valid and legal right to copy.
  - f. Engage in any activity that utilizes University technology to copy any software from any source for which the user does not have a valid and legal license.
  - g. Engage in any use that is illegal or results in the commission of any illegal activity. Use University computer technology to support or oppose any candidates or candidates for public office, or for any other political purpose. (Use of State property for political purposes is against Alabama law.)
  - h. Engage in any non-educational purpose, such as for entertainment or leisure activities. Game playing is not considered appropriate use unless the use of a particular computer game is assigned by an authorized University official as an educational activity.
  - i. Transmit messages of a romantic or sexual nature to any person or persons. Create, display, transmit or make accessible threatening, racist, sexist, offensive, annoying or harassing language and/or material.
  - j. Transmitting unsolicited information which contains obscene or indecent material as defined by law.
  - k. Knowingly perform an act which will interfere with the normal operation or use of computers, terminals, peripherals, or networks.
  - l. Create copies, or take into the user's personal possession copies of institutionally owned software and/or hardware technology such as computers, components, disks, or peripherals.
  - m. Using another person's computer account or allowing someone else to use your account (e-mail, secure systems, etc.)
  - n. Sharing of personal e-mail accounts.
  - o. Masking the identity of an account or machine in any manner misrepresenting your identity in email or other electronic communication.
  - p. Creating, modifying, executing or retransmitting any computer program or instructions intended to obscure the true identity of the sender of electronic mail or electronic messages, collectively referred to as "Messages," including, but not limited to, forgery of Messages and/or alteration of system and/or user data used to identify the sender of Messages.

- q. Communicating any information concerning password, identifying code, personal identification number or other confidential information without the permission of its owner.
  - r. Attempts to gain unauthorized access to any information facility, whether successful or not. This includes running programs that attempt to calculate or guess passwords, or that are designed and crafted to trick other users into disclosing their passwords, and any attempts to circumvent data protection schemes or uncover security loopholes. It also includes electronic eavesdropping or communication facilities.
4. **Internet Access:** Any employee or student access to the Internet through the University's computer network is limited to the acceptable use as set out below. Likewise, any employee or student who accesses the Internet through the University's computer network for an unacceptable use or causes an unacceptable result will be held accountable for the violation.
- a. The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of Athens State University. Transmission of any material in violation of any federal or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. Any use of the Internet through the University's computer network for political advertisement or political lobbying is also strictly prohibited.
  - b. Users of the Internet through the University's computer network are expected to abide by the rules of network etiquette. Any swearing, vulgarities or other inappropriate language is prohibited. Users are also prohibited from revealing personal addresses or phone numbers of students or colleagues.
  - c. Users are hereby warned that e-mail is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
  - d. Internet access is conditional upon strict compliance with any additional University rules attached hereto.
5. **Access is a Privilege, Not a Right:** The University reserves the right to deny the privilege of the use of any or all types of computer technology to individuals who violate this Acceptable Use Policy. Users may also be held accountable for violations of Federal and/or Alabama Laws (i.e. Computer-Related Crime, etc.). Violations of this policy may result in the termination or suspension of employment, suspension of computing privileges, disciplinary review, any other forms of employee or student discipline, and/or financial restitution to the University for any damages and costs related to inappropriate or unacceptable use, and/or criminal or civil legal action. Athens State University reserves the right to modify or clarify this policy at any time.
6. **Computer Crimes:** The Alabama Computer Crime Act, codified at Code of Alabama (1975) §§ 13A-8-101 - 13A-8-103, makes it a crime for a person to damage, or without authorization to modify, computer equipment, computer networks, and computer programs and supplies, or without authorization to access, examine, or use computer data and programs, and provides for punishment up to a Class B Felony (imprisonment for 2 to 20 years and/or a fine up to \$10,000.00 or double the damage or loss to the victim). A copy of the Alabama Computer Crime Act is available for the reader's information. Federal law also makes it a crime to, without authorization, access level to computers or computer networks devoted in part to Federal purposes. Any violation of such

State or Federal laws respecting computers shall also constitute a violation of the Athens State University Computer Technology Acceptable Use Policy. Furthermore, this policy prohibits various actions (described above) which may or may not constitute a crime.