Rollins College Acceptable Use Computer Policy

This document provides guidelines for appropriate use of computer facilities and services at Rollins College. It is not a comprehensive document covering all aspects of computer use. It offers principles to help guide members of the Rollins College community, and specific policy statements that serve as a reference points. It will be modified as new questions and situations arise. The policies articulated here have been in place for several years, some in writing and others borne of practice.

While the proliferation of computers and information technologies does not alter basic codes of behavior in academic life, it does place some issues in new contexts. Using these technologies enables people to do varied things - both good and bad - more easily. They are an enormously rich resource for innovation in the furtherance of Rollins College's academic mission. They also offer new forums for the College's commitment to the expression and discussion of a wide diversity of ideas and opinions. But they increase the risks of actions, deliberate or not, that are harmful in various ways, including:
(a) interference with the rights of others;
(b) violation of the law;
(c) interference with the mission of the College; or
(d) endangering the integrity of the College's information computer network.

The guidelines that follow in the next section of this document seek to forge the link between established codes of conduct and use of new technologies. Computer networking has greatly expanded our ability to access and exchange information, requiring more vigilant efforts and perhaps more secure safeguards to protect individuals' rights of privacy. Property, as well as privacy rights, may be infringed whenever files or data belonging to others, or the electronic identity of others, however gained, are used without authorization. Moreover, while freedom of inquiry and expression are fundamental principles of academic life, assaults upon the personal integrity of individual members of the academic community and dissemination of offensive materials may undermine the foundations of that community. Other actions taken by individuals may jeopardize the integrity of the computer network and the ability of others to communicate using this system. Accordingly, the guidelines that follow seek to both preserve the freedom to inquire and share information and sustain the security and integrity of individuals within the community and the computer system itself.

While some of the guidelines call for respectful and responsible use of the computer networks to protect the rights of individuals, others warn against actions that may violate the law. Users within the academic community must understand the perils of illegal use, exchange, or display of copyrighted, deceptive, defamatory, or obscene materials on a web page or through other electronic communication channels.

The community at large has rights and expectations that must be considered. When individuals misrepresent either themselves or the College, or when they act by computer in a manner unacceptable within the College or in the larger community, the integrity and mission of the College itself is endangered.

Finally, the guidelines seek to protect the integrity of the College's information systems themselves: the computing or networking resources need to be accessible and secure for appropriate uses consistent with the mission of the College; the usurpation of these resources for personal gain or without authorization is unacceptable. Moreover, even the individual right to privacy may, when personal files may need to be accessed for troubleshooting purposes, be overridden by authorized personnel to protect the integrity of the College's computer systems.

Principles and Guidelines

A. Respect the rights and sensibilities of others

1. Electronic mail should adhere to the same standards of conduct as any other form of mail. Respect others you contact electronically by avoiding distasteful, inflammatory, harassing or otherwise unacceptable comments. (In an academic community, the free and open exchange of ideas and viewpoints preserved by the concept of academic freedom may sometimes prove distasteful, disturbing or offensive to some. This policy is not intended to restrict such exchange.)
2. Respect the privacy of others and their accounts. Do not access or intercept files or data of others without permission. Do not use the password of others or access files or e-mail under false identity.
3. Distribution of excessive amounts of unsolicited email is inappropriate.
4. While the College encourages respect for the rights and sensibilities of others, it cannot protect individuals against the existence or receipt of materials that may be offensive to them. Those who make use of electronic communications may come across or be recipients of material they find offensive or simply annoying.

B. Be aware of the legal implications of your computer use.

1. The Internet enables users to disseminate material worldwide. Thus the impact of dissemination on the Internet is often far broader than that of a statement made on paper or in routine conversation. Keep in mind that a larger audience means a greater likelihood that someone may object with or without legal basis.
2. Much of what appears on the Internet is protected by copyright law regardless of whether the copyright is expressly noted. Users should generally assume that material is copyrighted unless they know otherwise and not copy or disseminate copyrighted material without permission. Copyright

protection also applies to much software, which is often licensed to the College with specific limitations on its use. Both individual users and the College may, in some circumstances, be held legally responsible for violations of copyright.

3. Many other state and federal laws, including those prohibiting deceptive advertising, use of others' trademarks, defamation, violations of privacy, and obscenity apply to network-based communications.

4. Because the Internet is international, it can be argued that the (often more restrictive) laws of other countries may apply. This does not mean that members of the College community should be censored by extremely restrictive foreign laws, but in some situations the College must take into consideration whether violations of foreign laws may affect the activities of the College in those countries.

C. Respect the mission of the College in the larger community

1. The College makes Internet resources available to students, faculty and staff to further the College's educational, research, service and related missions. While incidental personal use is permissible in most settings, these resources are generally available only for College-related activities.

2. The College does not monitor the content of web pages, electronic mail or other on-line communications and is not responsible for the views expressed by individual users. Under certain circumstances, however, the College may be held liable if it fails to take reasonable remedial steps after it learns of illegal uses of its computer facilities. Use computer resources lawfully.

3. Remember that you are responsible for all activity involving your account. Keep your account secure and private. Do not use identifying data or common words as a password; your password should be difficult to crack or otherwise guess either by individuals or by sophisticated computer programs.

4. The College is the custodian of a wide array of personal and financial data concerning its students, staff, faculty and patients, as well as the College itself. Respect the College's obligations of confidentiality as well as your own. Only those with authorization may access, communicate or use confidential information.

5. Material posted on web pages is generally accessible and thus deserves even greater thought and care than your private electronic mail. Remember that, absent restrictions, your web page is available to anyone, anywhere, and act accordingly.

6. The College has a right to expect that computer users will properly identify themselves. Computer accounts are assigned and identified to individuals. Don't misrepresent yourself.

D. Do not harm the integrity of the College's computer systems and networks.

1. Today's information technology is a shared resource. Respect the needs of others when using computer and network resources. Do not tamper with facilities and avoid any actions that interfere with the normal operations of computers, networks, and facilities.

2. Although a respect for privacy is fundamental to the College's policies, understand that almost any

information can be read or copied, that some user information is maintained in system logs as a part of responsible computer system maintenance, that the College must reserve the right to examine computer files, and that, in rare circumstances, the College may be compelled by law or policy to examine even personal and confidential information maintained on College computing facilities.
3. You are granted privileges and responsibilities with your account. While these vary between groups, the use of College resources for personal commercial gain or for partisan political purposes (not including the expression of personal political views, debate and the like) is inappropriate and possibly illegal.

E. Complaints or concerns about this policy should be directed to the Chief Information Officer.