

Social Policies and Regulations:

Ethics of Computer Usage

The College seeks to provide the computing resources needed to meet the academic and educational needs of our students, faculty, and staff. We believe that users should be encouraged to learn about the systems beyond just those things needed to do the job at hand, that they should be secure in the privacy of their files from inspection, modification, or deletion by others, and that the available resources should be shared equitably among the users. In order to realize these goals it is essential that the users themselves observe reasonable standards of responsible and ethical behavior. These standards derive from notions of common sense and decency that apply in any situation involving a limited shared public resource.

While a distinction must be made between irresponsible behavior arising from ignorance and unethical behavior stemming from malicious intent, it is the obligation of every user to acquire knowledge of the system that will minimize the likelihood of unintentional offenses. Willful departures from community standards of ethical behavior cannot be accepted.

While some computer software is in the public domain and can be legally copied, most software on College computers is copyrighted. Copying this software is theft. In general, one copy of software must be purchased for every computer, whether or not the computers are networked.

Since our computers are connected to national and international networks of computers, all users must be aware of the rules governing use of these networks. Just like the computers on campus, our access to the networks and off-campus resources must be shared equitably.

Some examples of unethical behavior involving the use of computer resources are:

- deleting, renaming, or modifying application files on the microcomputers so that other users are hampered in their ability to use them
- using computer resources for non-academic work when this interferes with users who have coursework to do
- accessing accounts belonging to others without *explicit* permission
- copying software in the microcomputer labs for use on a personally owned microcomputer
- sending chain letters or unwanted mail (including "mail bombs" and "**SPAM**") over the computer networks
- taking paper from the computer labs to use with your own printer
- using College computer resources for personal profit
- knowingly bringing a virus-infected disk into the computer labs
- treating computing equipment so roughly as to damage it

These examples are intended as illustration of unethical behavior and are not intended to constitute an all-

inclusive list of them. For a more complete listing of computing rights and responsibilities or if in doubt as to the propriety of some behavior or action, see Information Services. Every person who receives computer usage privileges at Kalamazoo College is required to sign a policy compliance statement. A copy of the entire computing policy is available upon request.

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Office of Student Development at Kalamazoo College

Hicks Center, 1200 Academy Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 49006-3295

(269) 337-7210

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