

Computing Code of Ethics

Trent University maintains information technology facilities for the benefit of students, faculty and the administration of the University. The efficient operation of these facilities requires cooperation between users and the staff of the Information Technology department. The hardware in these facilities is the property of the University; the software, and the files of users are intellectual property. All require respect. Access to the information technology facilities is thus a privilege that can be withdrawn if users abuse the hardware or software, or violate the rights and needs of others. Use of the information technology facilities at Trent entails consent to the following regulations:

1. Users shall employ only those computer accounts for which they are authorized, and shall take the precautions necessary to prevent others from obtaining access to their computer resources, including file protection. Users shall not use, gain access to or copy programs and data belonging to other users or to Trent University.
2. Users shall not destroy or alter the data of other users, or obstruct, interrupt or interfere with the authorized use of data or information technology equipment.
3. Information technology facilities shall be used only for the purposes for which they were authorized. Users shall not subvert the restrictions associated with their computer accounts.
4. Information technology facilities shall not be used for personal financial gain without express contractual arrangements with the University.
5. Users shall not attempt to interfere with the normal operation of any aspect of the computer systems.

Disciplinary Action:

Investigation and appeal of abuse shall follow distinct stages. At all stages, computer users are entitled to fairness and due process.

Stage One: Suspicion and Preliminary Investigation

When an abuse of the Code of User Ethics is suspected, the Director of Information Technology has the right to conduct a preliminary examination. Normally, such an investigation shall include the examination of accounting information, files, programs, or tapes, but shall be confined to the physical parameters of files. Accounts will only be disabled at this Stage to protect the integrity of the system or the security of user files.

Stage Two: After Reasonable Grounds Are Established

The Director and Staff of Information Technology are responsible for the integrity and security of centrally managed information technology facilities. On reasonable grounds,

the Director may temporarily withdraw information technology privileges pending the further investigation of the suspected abuse.

The Director shall then in writing expeditiously inform individuals whose information technology privileges have been temporarily withdrawn, giving precise grounds for the belief that they have committed an abuse. They shall also be given notice of any plans for intrusive investigation of their files. No intrusive investigation into the contents of files shall proceed without the authorization of the Vice President (Administration and University Services).

Serious abuse of the information technology facilities will always be reported to the Vice President (Administration and University Services). If the activities involve offences under the Criminal Code, Trent University will deal with them as such.

Stage Three: Appeal Procedures

The Director of Information Technology has the right to propose penalties if the due process outlined in Steps One and Two has confirmed abuse. The normal penalty will be withdrawal of access to the information technology facilities. The penalties must be authorized by the Vice President (Administration and University Services). Students wishing to appeal against a penalty have recourse to the student appeals structure within the University; faculty and staff wishing to appeal can use the grievance procedures that are part of their collective agreements.