

Northeast Mississippi Community College Appropriate Computer Use Policy

Please read carefully. Use of the computing and communications facilities of NEMCC imply consent to abide by this statement.

General Principles

This statement governs the use of all computers, computer-based communications networks, and all related equipment administered by NEMCC. This includes the centralized facilities of NEMCC, and all computers and networks administered by NEMCC. Under the federal statutes and the sections of the Mississippi code that regulate the use of these resources, NEMCC is required to ensure that this equipment is used properly and for the purpose for which state funds were expended. The intent of this policy is to allow maximum freedom of use consistent with state and federal law, NEMCC policy, and a productive learning and working environment.

Any restriction of use contained within this statement is intended to protect the NEMCC resource for its intended use and for which funding is appropriated.

Appropriate use reflects academic honesty and ethical behavior and demonstrates consideration in the consumption of shared resources. It shows respect for intellectual property, ownership of data, system security mechanisms, and the rights of others to privacy and to freedom from intimidation, harassment, and unwarranted annoyance.

The user bears the primary responsibility for the material that he or she chooses to access, send or display. Those who do not adhere to this statement may be subject to suspension of computing or communications privileges or disciplinary actions.

Authorized Use

Individuals may use NEMCC centralized and departmental computing facilities only with the express authority of the system manager responsible for the facility. Using an account that belongs to another individual or giving an individual other than the owner access to an NEMCC account is prohibited. Each user is responsible for all activity originating from his or her account. All usage is to be for the benefit of currently enrolled students at NEMCC.

System managers authorize system accounts and the use of the facilities. In certain cases, NEMCC system managers may designate an appropriate agent to authorize accounts. Authorized users of NEMCC computing and communications facilities generally include the faculty, staff, administration, board, and students of NEMCC.

Individuals found using NEMCC computing facilities without express authorization are subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution. Individuals found assisting others in gaining unauthorized access to NEMCC computing facilities are subject to

the suspension or revoking of computing privileges, disciplinary action, and criminal prosecution.

Access to networks connected to NEMCC facilities must follow the acceptable use policies of those networks.

Appropriate Use

Appropriate use of NEMCC computing facilities includes these functions:

- The facilitation of official work of college offices, departments, and sanctioned campus organizations.
- The support of instructional activities.
- The support of independent study and research by authorized users.
- The exchange and pursuit of information via the Internet on computers designated for that purpose.

Priority and balance for computer services and usage is established by the Computer User Committee and is adopted as policy by the College. Computer services and usage are rendered according to the following priorities:

1. Business operations of the College
2. Registration and student data
3. Institutional research
4. Advising and Counseling
5. Faculty and staff use
6. Model building for high school counseling
7. Other.

Because NEMCC computing facilities serve diverse purposes and diverse constituencies, rules for use may vary somewhat across systems and labs. Activities having valid state citizenry benefits, but which are not specifically tied to routine work assignments, are generally allowed; however, they may be limited or banned on certain systems at the discretion of NEMCC system managers, according to system load and system function. For example, recreational game playing on NEMCC computing facilities is strictly prohibited. System dependent policies are to be communicated to users through online messages, news items, and postings. Compliance with the NEMCC Appropriate Computer Use Policy requires compliance with all system and lab dependent policies. Whenever there is a question as to whether a specific activity is appropriate, the primary consideration should be whether such action or conduct would be consistent with that expected of the post secondary student as viewed by parents and faculty and staff of NEMCC. Contact the system manager for any question regarding appropriateness.

NEMCC computing facilities are not to be used for individual commercial purposes or financial gain. NEMCC computing facilities are not to be used for partisan political purposes.

Computer Software Usage

NEMCC computing facilities utilize many software applications, with a wide range of license and copyright provisions. Users are responsible for availing themselves of appropriate information and complying with the license and copyright provisions of the software that they use. NEMCC prohibits the unauthorized copying or electronic transmission of copyrighted computer software, computer data, and software manuals using facilities of NEMCC unless appropriate written consent is obtained from the software vendor or licensor.

Such unauthorized duplication is grounds for disciplinary action by management and is subject to criminal prosecution under Mississippi Computer Statutes (Sections 97-45-1 through 97-45-13 of the Mississippi Code of 1972 [1994]), as well as under the Federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986.

According to the U.S. Copyright Statutes, illegal reproduction of software can be subject to civil damages of \$50,000 or more and criminal penalties including fines and imprisonment. Under the Mississippi Computer Crimes Law, the maximum fine is \$10,000 and the maximum imprisonment sentence is 5 years.

User Responsibilities

Respect the integrity of the NEMCC computing environments and computing environments reachable by NEMCC network connections.

No individual shall, without authorization, access, use, destroy, alter, dismantle or disfigure NEMCC technologies, properties or facilities. If an individual encounters or observes vulnerability in system or network security, then that individual must report the vulnerability to the NEMCC system manager. Individuals must refrain from exploiting any vulnerability in security.

No individual shall use NEMCC computing facilities to gain illegal access or entry into other computers. NEMCC users must follow any policies (which may be more restrictive than this policy) governing the use of any remote hosts accessed.

Publishing information, which enables or encourages unauthorized access to any computer systems, is specifically prohibited.

Illegal, fraudulent or malicious activities are expressly prohibited, as are partisan political activities, religious lobbying or proselytizing, and political lobbying. Activities for the purpose of personal or commercial gain are expressly prohibited.

Respect the privacy of other individuals.

Any use of NEMCC computing and network resources, which violates the privacy of any other individual, is prohibited.

The creation or transmission of defamatory material is expressly prohibited.

Files belonging to individuals are to be considered private property unless the owner of the files gives explicit authorization. That a user can read a file does not mean that a user may read a file. The ability to alter a file does not give a user the right to alter a file.

Respect the finite capacity of systems.

No individual shall monopolize or hoard resources, (including PCs, workstations, and terminals) network bandwidth, printing facilities, dial-in connections, limited-use software licenses, and system resources such as CPU, disk, and memory.

No individual may request an account with the intent of making it available to another user.

Student "chatting" (two or more users conducting a real-time, on-line conversation by typing) has led to individuals monopolizing computers, resulting in other students not being able to use a computer for academic research. Therefore, "chatting" is prohibited in academic buildings and in the library. Use computing facilities in a manner that promotes a productive and professional working environment—locally, nationally, and internationally.

Computer communications systems and networks promote the free exchange of ideas and information, thus enhancing the network environment. Individuals should not use electronic communications systems such as e-mail, list servers, news groups, interactive talk or chat messages, or individual home pages to harass or offend others or to interfere with their work.

Other examples of misuse include:

1. sending unsolicited messages, mail or communications of any kind to persons who have not requested it or who cannot be reasonably expected to welcome such communications;
2. printing or displaying materials (images, sound, messages) that are unsuitable for public display or that could create an atmosphere of discomfort or harassment for others;
3. representing personal opinions as official NEMCC statements.

NEMCC computing facilities are not to be used in a wasteful or frivolous manner (e.g., tying up system or network resources with computer-based game playing, sending trivial or excessive messages, publishing WWW pages which require excess system resources, printing excess copies of documents, files, data, or programs, running grossly inefficient programs when efficient alternatives are available, etc.).

Individuals may not use NEMCC computing resources to create, distribute, or download pornographic or obscene content. Individuals must comply with all applicable law concerning copyright, patent, trademark, and licensing agreements in their use of NEMCC computing resources. They must not infringe on the intellectual property of others. Individuals must not attempt to circumvent or subvert system security measures.

Protect your account.

Even the best computer systems cannot protect the individual who fails to conceal his or her password.

To prevent abuse of your account,

1. physically protect your session,
2. never record a password where it could be found,
3. never reveal your password.

Follow NEMCC guidelines for password selection and change your password often. Inform NEMCC system managers when you leave your institution so that your account may be properly closed.

Electronic Mail

The colleges electronic mail system ("e-mail") is provided for use in connection with college business. Occasional personal use of e-mail is permitted, but personal messages will be treated no differently from messages relating to the college's business.

Employees should recognize the e-mail messages are not necessarily protected from disclosure. It is possible for messages protected by a password to be accessed by others under certain circumstances. Persons to whom they are not directed either intentionally or inadvertently can always read messages that are not protected by passwords.

All e-mail messages are considered college records. The college reserves the right to access and disclose all messages sent over the e-mail system for any purpose, including the right to disclose e-mail messages to law enforcement officials without prior notice. You should treat e-mail like any other shared filing system—with the expectation that messages will be available for review by college representatives for any purpose related to college business.

The college may monitor e-mail messages on a random basis or as a routine matter. Supervisors may review e-mail communications to determine whether there have been any breaches of security, violations of college policy, or breaches of duty of employees. The college may also use computer programs that monitor e-mail messages electronically for purposes of assuring system security and compliance with college policies.

It is a violation of college policy for any employee to use the e-mail system without the college's authorization to obtain access to communications between others. Employees found to have engaged in such "eavesdropping" will be disciplined appropriately and may be terminated.

World Wide Home Pages

NEMCC, in order to encourage mutual sharing of information, creativity, diversity, and technical knowledge within the student body and beyond, offers to authorize users of NEMCC computing resources the use of its facilities for publishing information on the World Wide Web. Certain restrictions as to platforms available for WWW publishing and resources allotted may be necessary due to system limitations.

Publishers of Web pages must avoid the use of inflammatory or offensive language and symbols in their individual home pages. Due to the public nature of Web publishing, and the increasing number of K-12 students who are accessing it, individual home pages must not contain violent or erotic material, or provide links to sites, which contain such material.

Individual home pages are subject to all applicable provisions contained in this Appropriate Computer Use Policy. NEMCC may provide resources for WWW pages, but it takes no responsibility for the individual opinions expressed therein. However, it reserves the right to monitor content and to terminate access to any pages, which are not in compliance with this policy.

NEMCC Rights and Responsibilities

Acknowledgement of this policy statement authorizes appropriate NEMCC system managers to examine user files, mail, individual home pages and monitor computer activities, if necessary. However, no such monitoring or inspection will take place without the approval of the Director of Computing Services.

This includes:

1. NEMCC instructors and/or staff responsible for a given computer system
2. Computer Center personnel.

While individual privacy will be respected to the extent possible, no guarantee of complete privacy is made. NEMCC reserves the right to stop any process, restrict any individual's use, inspect, copy, remove or otherwise alter any data, file, WWW page, or system resource that may undermine or adversely affect the overall performance or integrity of the computing facilities or is otherwise in violation of this policy.

NEMCC system and network administrators will take reasonable precautions to ensure that potentially offensive materials do not reside on local facilities; however, NEMCC cannot be held responsible for materials residing on remote sites or individual home pages. Individuals are cautioned to exercise judgment in accessing such materials and should be aware that such access can be traced back to the individual.

Consequences

Violation of the NEMCC Appropriate Computer Use Policy may result in the following penalties:

- Limiting or prohibiting public accesses to files or directories on WWW, gopher, or FTP servers.
- Suspension for varying amounts of time or the permanent revoking of computing and communications privileges. NEMCC systems managers reserve the right to restrict immediately the computing privileges of individuals who have violated this policy until suitable, comprehensive disciplinary action is determined.
- Reporting of the violation to the appropriate disciplinary organizations for users not directly associated with NEMCC.
- Referral to the appropriate law enforcement agency in cases of violations of state or federal law.

Action may be taken immediately by the NEMCC systems manager in any case of suspected violation of this policy. The affected user will be notified when such action is taken and may file any resulting grievance.

This policy was adapted (with permission) from the University of Mississippi Appropriate Use Policy.

Revisions

This statement is subject to revision. NEMCC will adequately post revisions, but it is the user's responsibility to ensure that use of the NEMCC computing and communication facilities conforms to current policies. Questions related to this statement should be addressed to the NEMCC Director of Computing Services.

Last updated-September, 2016