

**Michigan State University College of Law**  
**Policy on Acceptable Use of Information Systems – Faculty and Staff**

**Introduction – General Principles**

Michigan State University College of Law provides its faculty and staff with access to its information systems to support teaching, scholarship, service and administration. This policy outlines the acceptable use of those information systems. In general, all usage is acceptable if it is legal, consistent with other policies of MSUCL, and does not compromise others' use of MSUCL information systems. Except under specific and limited circumstances, all use of those information systems, and all user files and email residing thereon, shall be held in strictest confidence.

**Guidelines for Acceptable Use**

Core Uses

Core uses are those relating to MSUCL teaching, scholarship, service and administration and their deployment is encouraged and supported. Examples include classroom use, computer-based assignments, research applications, communication among faculty, students, and administrators, administrative applications, and access to information relating to MSUCL.

Ancillary Uses

Ancillary uses are those which are neither core nor unacceptable uses, and which do not interfere with or become an undue burden on others' use of technology services. Ancillary use is permitted but not actively supported. It consumes only resources that would otherwise be unused, and does not require any action or intervention by anyone at MSUCL other than the user. Typical examples are personal communications and research: using MSUCL servers to send and receive reasonable amounts of personal email, or using web services for shopping or vacation travel planning.

Unacceptable Use

Unacceptable use of technology services includes:

- uses that are illegal, such as fraud, harassment, or violation of copyright; and
- uses that deprive other users of access to technology services or interfere with the functioning of central networks and systems, such as mass mailings, chain letters, unauthorized high-bandwidth applications, or denial-of-service attacks.

Unacceptable use is not permitted, and failure to discontinue an unacceptable use may result in loss of computing privileges.

**Privacy**

User information stored in the systems of the MSUCL shall be treated as confidential. MSUCL will make reasonable efforts to ensure that user files and email messages remain private, and will not monitor their contents. Technology Services staff

are not authorized to access a user's account or files without the user's explicit permission. Exceptions to this paragraph may be made only with the written approval of the Dean, and for the investigation of:

- suspected violations of local, state or federal law; or
- programs or files suspected of causing disruption or damage to the network.

Systems administrators may also see the contents of an email when investigating addressing errors, resolving technical problems with the system, or upon the termination of a user's affiliation with MSUCL. The contents of private email disclosed under these circumstances shall remain strictly confidential, and such disclosure shall not constitute a waiver of privilege.

### **Applicability**

Accepting any account or using MSUCL information systems shall constitute an agreement on behalf of the user to be bound by the provisions of this Policy.

*Adopted by vote of the Faculty May 16, 2001*