

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees that all College employees and students follow the rules, regulations, and laws pertaining to electronic communications.

Adopted June 22, 2000
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ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

DEFINITION

Electronic Communication is defined as all electronic means of communication owned and operated by the College, such as the computer network (hardware and software), telephone systems, and facsimile machines.

PHILOSOPHY

WWCC honors and respects the privacy and academic freedom of its members and strives to permit maximum freedom of use consistent with College policies as well as state and federal laws.

'An irresponsible or unlawful electronic communication sent by any employee can expose an institution to liability, loss of proprietary information, or loss of other assets. On the other hand, inappropriate monitoring of or limitations on the use of electronic communications can stifle academic exchange, violate employees' expectations of privacy, and diminish employee morale. An educational institution must carefully balance these two concerns when developing an electronic communication policy.'

*Jackie R. McClain
CUPA President, 1999-2000*

Note: This statement clarifies the applicability of law and of existing College policies for the use of the electronic communication systems at Western Wyoming Community College. It also defines new policy and conventions of use where existing policies and practices do not address issues uniquely specific to these systems.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the electronic communication systems at Western Wyoming Community College is to support and advance the College's mission of teaching, learning, and public service, and related administrative needs. This includes access to electronic information and sharing of ideas and information within the College community and with external audiences. The electronic communications systems are the property of the College and access to these systems is a privilege accorded to members of the College community. The systems and facilities are supported by public funds and are to be used primarily for College related work. Examples include communication between and among students, faculty, and other employees, homework, class projects, sanctioned research projects, and business operations of the College.

In using these electronic communication resources, users accept full responsibility for their actions and agree that they will use these resources in an ethical manner for the purposes herein. The College will make a continuing effort to educate the College community in responsible use and to respond when violations are pointed out.

Access granted to users is subject to all College policies and procedures, and to federal state and local laws. The electronic communication systems may not be used for commercial for-profit purposes nor may the system be used in any manner that overloads the system or alters the system. The College allows limited personal use so long as this use is incidental to the purposes stated above and does not interfere with the completion of an employee's duties.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

All employees who use the campus electronic communication systems must comply with federal, state, and local laws. Users who violate the law will be individually responsible for their actions.

- **Laws Governing Copyrighted Materials**
Copyright and other laws, licenses, and other contractual agreements protect software programs, images, sounds, text, and related materials. Users who reproduce or distribute copyrighted works without permission infringe on the author's rights, and may be violating the U.S. Copyright Law and be subject to civil damages and criminal penalties.
- **Laws Governing Sexual Harassment**
Sending unwanted and/or offensive communications via the campus electronic communication systems may constitute sexual harassment (WWCC Policy 4420B) and violate the intended use of these systems. The Procedure is consistent with Federal laws.
- **Other Laws**
There are other laws that govern the use of electronic communication systems. Examples of illegal use include distributing scams and pyramid schemes or threatening other persons or property. This includes "hoax messages." Ignorance of such laws does not protect the user.

PRIVACY ISSUES

The College does not routinely inspect, monitor, or disclose electronic media without the user's consent. Nonetheless, subject to the authorization of the appropriate Vice President and College President, the College may deny access to its electronic services and may inspect, monitor, or disclose electronic mail (1) when required by and consistent with law; (2) when there is substantial reason to believe violations of law or of College policies have taken place; (3) when there are compelling circumstances under time-dependent, critical operational circumstances when failing to act (a) may result in significant bodily harm, significant property damage, loss of evidence of one or more violations of the law or College policies, or significant liability to the College, or (b) could seriously hamper the ability of the College to function administratively.

Users of the systems should keep in mind that, due to the nature of existing technology, total privacy of electronic communications cannot be guaranteed. System administrators, however, will not read e-mail or other files unless authorized by the appropriate College officials as described or with permission of the user, and will treat the contents of those files as private information at all times.

- Attempts to circumvent the mechanisms that protect private information from examination by others in order to gain unauthorized access to the system and to private information are unlawful and a violation of this Procedure.
- Individuals are responsible for protecting their access privileges, including any access codes or passwords. It is a violation of this procedure to use another user's ID and password to access computer or network systems or to supply false information to obtain access to a computer or the network.

TECHNICAL MISUSE

Technical misuse of these systems includes, but is not limited to:

- Intentionally interfering with the legitimate use of others.
- Proliferating undesired, false, or damaging electronic transmissions, such as chain letters, hoaxes, broadcast messages, SPAM, worms, or viruses.

ELECTRONIC COURTESY

In an effort to maintain a civil climate on our electronic communication systems, please consider any bothersome effects your usage of the system might have on others. Specifically, please note the following requests:

- When sending personal messages, send and forward these messages only to personal distribution lists.
- Honor requests by users to be removed from personal distribution lists.
- Use the College-maintained distributions (such as All Faculty and Staff) only to send messages and announcements pertaining to College-related business.
- View any image or text you wish in private. Be aware, however, that exposing others to those same images and texts may be in violation of the law and/or College policies.

RESOURCE LIMITATIONS

Electronic communication resources are limited and the use of resource intensive items (such as RealPlayer, instant messaging, online video, online audio, online games, large file transfers, etc.) often impacts other users. During the hours 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Monday through Friday, please refrain from sending, viewing, playing or downloading resource intensive items unless it is related to WWCC business. Although these practices are not illegal, they interfere with the effectiveness of the system for all users.

Penalties for violations of this Procedure include, but are not limited to, a reprimand, loss of the users' account and/or other sanctions deemed appropriate by the Vice President and College President.

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