

Email Rights and Responsibilities

The information that staff generates or maintains in the course of their duties belongs not to them individually but to the University, which entrusts it to their custody. University information must be accumulated, stored, safeguarded and shared in the University's interests.

Those who intentionally or carelessly disregard their responsibilities for the safekeeping of University information are subject to appropriate corrective action or discipline, including, when warranted, termination and legal action.

The malicious alteration of data, documents or other types of information is a grave breach of accepted standards and is subject to the most severe sanctions.

The Reasonable Expectation of Privacy

It has long been the custom at Harvard that supervisors and co-workers respect their colleagues' privacy in the workplace. The fact that a desk, office, or computer is University property does not, by itself, entitle a supervisor or colleague to enter or access it without the knowledge or the permission of the employee when to do so would infringe a reasonable expectation that the space is private.

The expectation of privacy is not absolute, however. It must be reasonable. In the technological workplace, this means that no employee has the right to impose unreasonable restrictions on access to data that others may need to carry out their own responsibilities. As noted above, the information belongs to the University, not the individual; and it must be used according to the University's interests, not according to the unilateral determinations of the employee who is entrusted with its custody. Systems Administrators may from time to time need to monitor system use in ways that make them privy to what users are doing. This need is legitimate when appropriately directed and confined, and users should be made aware that it will be done.

An email message is intended for the person to whom it is addressed, and there is a reasonable expectation that no one else will read it without permission. A deliberate attempt to read another's mail, knowing it is not meant for the reader, is a serious breach of ethical conduct. At the same time, there is no right to use email for objectives that are illegal or inimical to the University' purpose.

Electronic Communication

Harvard neither sanctions nor censors individual expression of opinion on its systems. The same standards of behavior, however, are expected in the use of electronic mail as in the use of telephones and written and oral communication. Therefore electronic mail, like telephone messages, must neither be obscene nor harassing. Similarly, messages must not misrepresent the identity of the sender and should not be sent as chain letters or broadcast indiscriminately to large numbers of individuals. This prohibition includes unauthorized mass electronic mailings. For example, email on a given topic that is sent to large numbers of recipients should in general be directed only to those who have indicated a willingness to receive such email.

WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CLOSE ANY ACCOUNT WHICH VIOLATES THIS AGREEMENT

THE ACCOUNT ASSIGNED TO YOU IS FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE USE ONLY. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU PERMIT ANYONE ELSE TO USE YOUR ACCOUNT.

NEVER GIVE YOUR PASSWORD TO ANYONE, FOR ANY REASON.

I have read and agree to abide by these terms:

SIGNATURE

DATE

ADMINISTRATOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE

Return your signed form in person or via Interoffice mail to IT Administrative Office, KresgeLL15. Faxed forms will not be accepted.