

# Toronto Metropolitan University Student Computing Guidelines

TMU believes that information technology is vital to our educational mission. We provide the best possible learning environment with modern computers, helpful support staff and open access to the Internet. In return, we expect - and depend on - your co-operation. You need to be considerate of other users, to conduct yourself in a mature and professional manner, and to comply with the dictates of common sense and courtesy.

These guidelines outline your rights and responsibilities as a computing user. This is not intended as an inventory of computing offences and punishments; ultimately, your actions are subject to TMU's Student Code of Conduct, and the Criminal Code of Canada. However, we believe that once you know what's expected of you (and what you can expect of us), you'll conduct yourself accordingly.

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## Computing Access

Computing facilities - including central UNIX computers, laboratory workstations, terminals, printers, and software - are intended for educational purposes. They are provided so that you can complete assignments, communicate with your instructors and conduct research. This does not mean that you can't exchange email with your friends or read movie reviews on the web. It does mean we give priority of consideration to students using computing access for course work. We expect you to do the same. Don't tie up a modem line chatting on the Internet, or monopolize a workstation in a crowded lab while another student waits to print out an assignment.

## Privacy

As a computing user and a member of the Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) community, you have both a right and a responsibility to protect the privacy of your data, and to respect the privacy of others.

Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) system administrators observe the rights of all users for privacy and freedom of information. We will not examine the contents of mail logs, data files, or programs you stored in your disk area, unless we are investigating a case of system abuse. At such times we will notify you, and your instructor (or the Computing Coordinator of your program), of our actions, our reasons and our findings.

Files, login names, passwords, computer printouts, and disk areas are considered personal property. You must not examine or use someone else's computing property without explicit permission from the owner. Any attempts to evade protective mechanisms in the computer system or network, are considered a violation of the right to privacy and are punishable by the suspension of computing privileges as well as possible academic penalties.

If you have a lab, email, UNIX server, or any other type of account, you are responsible for keeping your password a secret. Change your password often and use passwords that are not "guessable" or decipherable. Don't use names or proper English words. Use nonsense words containing numbers or other characters.

Computing accounts are not transferable: do not give out your password to anyone. If someone accesses your computer account and creates mischief on TMU's system, or breaks into some other system on the Internet, it is you who will be held responsible. Make sure you take every reasonable precaution against unauthorized access to your computing account.

Under no circumstances may you sell or rent your login name to someone else: the penalty for this includes immediate and permanent loss of your computing privileges.

## Acceptable Behaviour

All users of Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) computing facilities are expected to treat the equipment, and the rights of other users, with respect. Because the entire academic community shares these resources we rely on each user to behave in a considerate and professional manner. Mischief and negligence affect everyone.

If you have questions about acceptable use of the computer systems, ask one of the lab advisors or contact the Academic Computing Information Centre (ext. 556840). For an idea of the types of behaviour that are emphatically not acceptable, refer to this list:

### Do Not:

- Obtain or use someone else's password.
- Let anyone know your password or use your accounts.
- Help someone gain unauthorized access to TMU's computers or networks.
- Attempt to gain access to files and resources to which you have not been given permission.
- Try to "crash" or slow down, the network or computing systems.
- Make copies of other people's files without their knowledge and consent.
- Interfere with other people's use of the system. For example, displaying messages or images on their terminals or workstations.
- Use the system for non-academic purposes that interfere with the primary goal of instructional support.
- Steal, vandalize or obstruct proper use of computing equipment, facilities, or documentation.
- Bring food or beverages into a computing lab.
- Use TMU computing facilities for personal and/or corporate gain.
- Copy any application, network or system software products that are on TMU owned systems.

- Attempt to install software on any lab computer.
- Misuse electronic mail and communications networks. For example, using the network for commercial purposes; sending obscene and/or prejudicial messages; transmitting excessively large files (1,000,000) bytes over external networks.
- Use any software obtained illegally, or not properly licensed for our systems.
- Knowingly introduce a computer virus or other disruptive program.
- Forget to log off before leaving a workstation you have used.

It is also completely unacceptable to use any TMU owned resource including computing and/or communications equipment to do any of the above outside of TMU. For example, just as you may not send obscene, prejudicial, offensive, or harassing messages to anyone within TMU, you also may not use TMU's communications or computing facilities to send these types of messages outside of TMU.

## Recreational Use

As mentioned above, the University's computing facilities are primarily for educational purposes, meaning for work directly related to the curriculum. That does not mean you are always forbidden from playing a computer game or chatting online, when facilities are available. However, you must exercise common sense. If a computing lab is full, don't tie up a workstation reading newsgroups. If the system is slow and heavily loaded, don't bog it down further by playing network games. Where additional restrictions are in place, such as a "no games" rule, obey them. Above all, if a lab advisor asks you to stop doing what you're doing, don't argue. Both student and full-time lab advisors have the final say on what constitutes appropriate computer use. If you disagree with the advisor's ruling, take it up with the Computing Coordinator of your department, or email [help@ryerson.ca](mailto:help@ryerson.ca).

## Software Licensing

Computing software is provided under special educational licenses, which allow the University to enjoy discounted prices in return for the promise that the software will be used only for teaching and learning, not for commercial purposes.

You may not, under any circumstances, use any TMU computer or software program for personal gain, or for any business or commercial enterprise. You may not sell, lease or rent programs, data, images or documents created or obtained using TMU computing facilities; you may not distribute such materials - even free of charge - to individuals outside the TMU community. This holds true if you are working on campus, or accessing TMU computers from off campus by modem.

You may not copy software from TMU computers for your own use or for distribution to other people. You may not install or use unauthorized (pirated) copies of software on TMU computers. Violation of software copyrights and licenses constitutes theft and may result in disciplinary action by the University as well as possible criminal prosecution by the producers of the copied software.

### Information Protection Policies

[TMU's Information Protection Policy](#)

[Information Protection and Access Policy - Restricted Information](#)

## Discrimination & Harassment Prevention Policy

TMU system administrators uphold the right of academic freedom for all members of the community. We make no attempt to censor or restrict access to information of any type or form. Instead, we expect users to exercise their own judgment in deciding what to read or view. Our advice is: If something offends you, don't look at it.

However, sometimes the right of academic freedom conflicts with the legal right of every student to work and study in an environment free of harassment or discrimination based on sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ethnic origin, etc. For example: when a student in a public lab displays an offensive image on a computer screen causing other students to complain or to leave the lab. In this case, the display of offensive images may create a poisoned environment. A poisoned work and/or study environment breaches TMU's Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy.

Other, more direct, forms of harassment include sending unwelcome messages to other users, or posting abusive or offensive messages on the networks.

This kind of behaviour is completely unacceptable at TMU. What may seem like harmless fun to you may be deeply offensive to others and could result in academic or legal disciplinary action. Please respect your fellow students and do your part to maintain a learning environment free of discrimination and harassment.

For more information on TMU's Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy, please contact [Human Rights Services](#) at 416-979-5349 or [humanrights@ryerson.ca](mailto:humanrights@ryerson.ca). A complete copy of the [Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy](#) is available.

## Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) & The Internet

The rules of conduct for TMU computer users still apply when you are using the Internet. You represent TMU, to the rest of the Internet community, when you send an off-campus email message, log into a remote site, or post an article to a newsgroup. Your actions affect everyone using the system. Misuse of the Internet by one student may result in the loss of Internet privileges for TMU as a whole, or the student body as a group.

The following quotation is taken from the Internet Activities Board (IAB) Statement of Policy. It lists the ground rules with which all Internet users are expected to comply:

**Access to and use of the Internet is a privilege and should be treated as such by all users of this system.**

**The IAB strongly endorses the view of the Division Advisory Panel of the National Science Foundation Division of Network, Communications Research and Infrastructure which, in paraphrase, characterized as unethical and unacceptable any activity which purposely:**

- A. Disrupts the intended use of the Internet,**
- B. Wastes resources (people, capacity, computer) through such actions,**

**C. Destroys the integrity of computer-based information, and/or**

**D. Compromises the privacy of users.**

While the rules of acceptable Internet use are straightforward, there are subtler details to network etiquette. The subject is too broad to be covered adequately here, but the list below gives you some basic guidelines. Most of these guidelines apply to Internet use in general; some apply specifically to the use of Newsgroups, FTP or email. If these terms are foreign to you, pick up a book on the Internet. Do not post on the web or send through E-mail, materials which are likely to be considered obscene or offensive.

- Do not post on the web or send through email, materials which are likely to be considered obscene or offensive.
- Do not participate in chain letter schemes. If you receive a chain letter, discard it; do not pass it on.
- Do not use the Internet for any commercial purpose. Do not advertise products or services over the Internet, or use the net to operate any type of business.
- Be considerate when using network resources. Do not post articles of local interest to worldwide newsgroups, or cross-post articles to many groups at once. Do not transfer large files from remote sites, especially during the day when the network is busiest.
- Don't engage in "flame wars"--insulting or abusive public exchanges with other network users. Such behaviour wastes resources and reflects poorly on you and the University.
- Do not post someone else's copyrighted material on the Internet. Do not post private email correspondence without the permission of the email's author.

Do not post or request instructions, for how to do some illegal act (such as jamming radar or obtaining cable TV service illegally).

## Penalties for Computing Abuse

TMU's expectations of computer users and the penalties, which may result from abuse of the computing systems, are outlined in the University Calendar as follows:

Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) students enjoy a full range of computer services and facilities. Students should be aware, however, that misuse of the computing facilities is an offence. Such offences include the use of the computing technology for purposes other than that for which computing authorization was originally issued: accessing, using, modifying, reading, copying, or distributing of data or programs that are not yours or are not intended for public use; interfering with the legitimate use of the computer by others; use of an account other than the one specifically assigned to you; not taking reasonable steps to ensure that no other person knows your password. Minor offences may be dealt with by making restitution to the parties who have suffered damage or injury. Serious abuse may result in expulsion. For the purpose of definition and data sets, all computer facilities operated within TMU University shall be deemed included, and data sets may be stored either online to the computer, or offline in any form.

Misuse of computer services and facilities by any user is an offence. Such offences may be dealt with under Section IV of the Code of Student Conduct.

Any tampering with or unauthorized use of TMU's computing facilities is indictable under sections 301 and 387 of The Criminal Code (Bill C-19).