

**South College**  
*Computer Code of Ethics*  
May 2008

*If there be any  
intangible  
possession that  
distinguishes an  
institution of  
higher learning, it  
is the tradition of  
freedom united  
with responsibility  
- freedom to do  
what one chooses,  
responsibility for  
what it is that one  
chooses to do.*

Carl Becker –  
American  
Historian  
(1917-41)

Freedom of expression and an open environment to pursue scholarly inquiry and for sharing of information are encouraged, supported, and protected at South College. These values lie at the core of our academic community. Moreover, the College is committed to the fair allocation of its resources and the provision of a learning environment free of needless disruption. To advance these goals, South College has adopted the following policies on computer usage. Most of these policies follow from pre-existing regulations, agreements, and/or Federal, State, and local laws.

Concomitant with free expression are personal obligations of each member of our community to use computing resources responsibly, ethically, and in a manner, which accords both with the law and, the rights of others. The campus depends first upon a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation to create and maintain an open community of responsible users.

## Quick Reference

Computing resources are provided for the use of the South College community. Never abuse them or others through them.

Every user is assigned an ID. Always remember the ID and the password.

Never share IDs with other individuals nor attempt to discover the ID or password of others.

All files belong to someone. Always assume they are private and confidential.

Tell the System Administrator if you accidentally discover files to which you should not have access.

Never attempt to deliberately disrupt system performance.

## OVERVIEW

This document outlines the acceptable use computers, networks, and related services at South College. This code has been developed to ensure a quality computing environment that furthers the mission of the college, specifically related to enhancing the educational and administrative services of the college. It provides educational information, but its primary purpose is as a regulatory policy. Additional information for employees is found at section 6.19 of the *Employee Handbook*.

## AUTHORIZED USERS & RIGHTS

Computing resources are made available for use by members of the faculty, staff, and student body. As with any community, common courtesy and ethical behavior from all members of the community promote fairness, consistency, and productivity. The privilege of using computer and network resources is extended to specific individuals and organizations and is not transferable. This privilege may be permanently revoked at any time in the absolute discretion of South College. Any questions regarding the appropriateness of an action should be referred to the college's System Administrator before proceeding.

### a) Electronic Harassment

South College strives to maintain an environment free from unlawful harassment of any kind. Any user who is the subject of or is aware of harassing conduct has an immediate duty to report the problem. Students should contact the System Administrator or the Dean of Academic Support and Student Services. Employees should contact their supervisor, the Executive Vice President or the President. Examples of behavior which violate this policy include (but are not limited to) posting images, playing sounds or sending electronic mail messages which are sexual in nature or which denigrate others on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, age, disability or other protected category, or accessing pornographic or racist areas or chat rooms. Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit faculty members or students from conducting research on or publishing materials related to legitimate course or discipline related work. Users should assume that their electronic correspondence is the legal equivalent of publicly spoken or written words.

### **Quick Reference**

Lack of knowledge is not an excuse.

Always refer any questions or clarifications to the System Administrator.

Appropriate uses of the computing resources at are: instruction, independent study and research, and The college administration.

Never install any computer software or information on South College computers without permission.

If you suspect that someone other than yourself has your user ID or password, contact the System Administrator immediately.

### **b) Protection of User Information**

Every precaution is taken to protect college equipment, systems and accounts from unauthorized access, including the assignment of user id's and passwords. However, it is impossible to guarantee unauthorized use or disclosure, and users must understand that there is no guarantee that information will be or will remain secure. Specifically, electronic mail messages are not secure and should not be considered private.

### **c) No Expectation of Privacy or Property Rights**

At its discretion and without notice, South College may, in the process of performing normal systems management and auditing functions, in the case of an emergency, or in the course of investigating wrongdoing, monitor system equipment and use and any information stored therein to insure that such use is consistent with this policy and with its legitimate business and legal interests, regardless of whether the equipment utilized belongs to the user or South College.

Users should be aware that only software and information approved by the college should be stored on college computers. Any unauthorized software or information stored on its equipment or systems is subject to South College's control, and thus may be examined, confiscated, or deleted in the same manner as any South College property.

### **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Users are expected to understand this code and abide by it. The code is widely distributed in all computer-related courses and is included in the *Student Handbook* and the *Employee Handbook*. Lack of knowledge is not an excuse. Failure to adhere to any of these policies may result in the disciplinary actions outlined in this code and the Handbooks mentioned above.

### **AUTHORIZED USE**

Appropriate uses of the computing resources at South College are: instruction, independent study and research, and the official work of the administrative offices. Incidental personal use of the college's networks and systems is permitted only to the extent that it does not interfere with its operations, is consistent with its policies and complies with all applicable civil or criminal laws.

## Quick Reference

Always adhere to copyrights and license agreement stipulations.

You are responsible for your actions.

Never be a mail bomber – someone who sends excessive e-mails.

Always identify yourself when sending messages to other users.

Never play games excessively or use computing resources for personal use beyond that approved by the System Administrator.

Never use computing facilities to plagiarize the work of others.

Never run a program sent to you unless you know what it does and thoroughly trust its source.

South College places the highest priority on quality instruction. In many instances technology can enhance and strengthen this process. Instructors and students are encouraged to make full use of all available computing resources in the classroom, library, and during scheduled lab times, keeping in mind that others share in these resources.

Administrative use of computing resources enhances the college's ability to provide timely and accurate services to students, graduates, and outside agencies associated with the college. The college places emphasis on the utilization of the administrative system to its fullest capacity. This emphasis includes extensive training provided to users and a full-time System Administrator to provide necessary assistance.

### UNAUTHORIZED USE

Inappropriate uses of South College computing resources include, but are not limited to the following categories.

#### **a) User IDs and Passwords**

A user ID is issued to all users of the administrative system utilized by the college. It is a violation of this code to use any user ID not assigned to you or to share your own or others' user IDs and passwords with other individuals.

#### **b) Copyright Infringement**

U.S. copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by "fair use." Users may not copy or distribute electronic materials (including electronic mail, text, images, programs or data) without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. Any responsibility for any consequences of copyright infringement lies with the user. South College expressly disclaims any liability or responsibility resulting from such use.

Most software is protected by both copyright law and contractual restrictions. The owner of the software copyright - and not the user of the software -- generally maintains the right to control the distribution and number of copies made of the software. Under no circumstances should software be loaded onto one of South College's computers without first obtaining the permission of a System Administrator. The College's resources must not be used to create, store, transfer, or execute software in a manner which

## **Quick Reference**

If modified,  
Computer settings  
Must always be  
returned to their  
original settings  
before logging off.

Report printer  
problems when  
they happen.

South College's  
computing  
resources must not  
be used in a  
manner that  
violates any local,  
state, or federal  
laws.

Potential violations  
of this code will be  
investigated and  
appropriate  
disciplinary or  
corrective action  
will be taken.

violates the rights of the holder of copyright in the software. Other material that may be accessed through the college's computers may be protected by copyright as well. Students must not access, store, reproduce, distribute, or display any material, including any graphics, sound clips, pictures, or text in a manner that violates the copyright of such material. This includes plagiarism or unauthorized copying of electronic documents.

### **c) Misuse**

Use of the college's computing resources for activities that interfere with its primary educational and administrative operations shall be considered misuse. This includes excessive game playing, downloading of music or other material that is not related to school work, the use of South College computers for personal work beyond allowable limits, reserving a public resource for later use, mailing or printing excessive messages or documents, downloading materials from the Internet or World Wide Web and submitting them for credit as one's own work or downloading or displaying obscene images or messages. Students must be sensitive to the special need for software and services available in only one location, and cede place to those whose work requires these special items. Users must refrain from any action that interferes with the supervisory or accounting functions of the systems or that is likely to have such effect. The loading of non-college Internet software such as America On-line or CompuServe is strictly prohibited.

### **d) Viruses**

Viruses are unauthorized computer programs that may destroy or damage computer files on an infected computer. Users should be aware of the possibility that a virus may be located in any file or disk obtained from a third party (This is one reason why users must obtain the permission of a supervisor before loading any software onto a South College computer). Users are expected to maintain an up-to-date working copy of a virus protection package on any computer that connects to the South College network. Users who have any doubts or concerns about the source of any file must seek approval by the System Administrator before loading the file.

### **e) Computer Settings**

South College computers are set up uniformly for a reason. When instructing students on computer concepts, uniformity of screen colors, icon locations, toolbars, printer settings, etc. promotes the learning of new concepts. When computers are different, students

## Quick Reference

User privileges may be suspended during any investigation.

Consequences include permanent suspension of user rights, probation or suspension from the college, or dismissal from position held.

Users may be held responsible for any liability damages or expenses resulting from misuse of South College computing resources.

must search for the information being referred to, causing confusion and additional unnecessary time. In certain classes, students may be asked to change several of these settings in order to learn about them; however the computer should always be restored to its original settings prior to logging off.

### **f) Printers**

If problems occur when printing documents, instructors, lab monitors, or the System Administrator should be informed. Do not attempt to remove any paper jams or reset the printers utilizing the printer menu functions.

### **SANCTIONS**

South College's computing resources must not be used in a manner that violates any local, state, or federal laws. There are currently many laws that govern certain aspects of computer use. Supervisors and System Administrators may be bound to report any violations of such laws if they do occur, and the college may be required to cooperate in certain investigations related to criminal or civil violations.

If a violation of this code is observed or reported, South College will respond by investigating pursuant to procedures outlined in the *Student Handbook* or *Employee Handbook*, whichever is appropriate. During such an investigation, the user's privileges may or may not be suspended. Once the investigation is complete, if the user is determined to have violated this code, appropriate discipline and/or corrective action will be taken.

For student alleged violations, the Dean of Academic Support and Student Services may convene a preliminary conference with the Executive Vice President, the appropriate Dean/Department Chair, and the student involved to consider the complaint. The conference members may recommend the following: no action warranted an administrative reprimand, disciplinary probation, or dismissal from the college.

The student will be informed of the decision within three working days of the conference. If the student is not satisfied with the decision made by the conference members and/or Dean, he/she may petition the decision by requesting a hearing before the Conduct Committee. The request must be made in writing to the

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Dean within three working days of the notice and must include the student's reasons for the petition. If no request is made, the decision is final. If a request is made for a hearing, the student will be notified by certified mail within 10 working days of the nature of the charges, time and date of the hearing, and the right to present applicable evidence on his/her behalf.

The Committee review shall consist of a careful and thorough hearing. All Committee hearings will be audio taped for record.

A final determination, by majority vote of Committee members, will recommend one of the following actions: removal of the charges against the student, administrative reprimand, disciplinary probation (which may or may not be recorded on the student's permanent record), disciplinary suspension for a specified period of time, or dismissal from the College. The Committee's decision will be sent by certified mail to the student within ten working days of the hearing.

The student may submit a written appeal of the decision of the Committee to the President, which must be received within ten working days after mailing of the notification. After consideration of the Committee report and the student's appeal, the President shall, within ten working days after receipt of the appeal, make a determination. The decision of the President is final at the institutional level.