



Baldwin-Wallace College
Department of Information Technology

Responsible Use of Information Technology Resources

Statement of General Policy

Baldwin-Wallace College provides access to information technologies for the private, non-commercial educational, research, cultural, and recreational uses of its students, faculty, and staff. These same technologies are also used by the College in support of its business functions. Limited access is also extended, through the World Wide Web, to people outside the College community to the extent that they can exchange e-mail with and view Web pages posted by members of the B-W community.

Baldwin-Wallace College also believes that a primary function of colleges and universities is to foster the free investigation and discussion of ideas. Electronic media are rapidly assuming an important role in this endeavor, along with traditional print and broadcast media. The same policies and protections that have governed these established media should be extended as naturally as possible to their new counterparts. In meeting these goals, Baldwin-Wallace will restrict, control, and edit the content of electronic media as little as is consistent with all state and local laws and College policies.

When a conflict arises between these multiple uses of technology resources, it must be realized that supporting the continued operation of the College in its primary mission – education, must come first. Thus, for a multi-use computing lab, course-related work is the first priority, followed by research and general productivity work, and then by cultural or recreational use. Hence, there may be occasions when recreational users of the Internet may be required to relinquish computer lab stations to students needing those facilities for assignments or research.

Privacy of Electronic Communications and Data

Person-to-person communications, such as e-mail, are considered to be as private as phone conversations. Upload and download of information shall be given the same level of privacy. Neither the College nor its employees will attempt to monitor, read, or distribute the content of such communications except when required to do so by law or a legal process served upon the College, or in extraordinary circumstances to protect the health and well-being of members of the community or the property or educational mission of the College.

The contents of an individual's computer files are to be accorded the same confidentiality as the corresponding non-electronic material in College-owned facilities. Thus, a student's computer files should be considered as private as documents located in his/her dorm room. Similarly, a faculty member's electronic grade books are to be considered as confidential as traditional paper grade books stored in the instructor's office desk.

However, users of information technology must realize that the College's IT staff may occasionally see the contents of e-mail or stored files in the process of maintaining the network computer system. For

example, a technician may be required to look at the contents of damaged files in the process of recovering data.

Users should also realize that data stored on public or shared network drives or servers, as well as public computers, cannot be fully-protected from view or access.

Access to Off-Campus Information

The College believes that the scholarly examination of ideas requires access to a very broad body of information. Any attempt to limit the availability of information to members of the B-W community must be undertaken only with good reason and the widest possible support. Therefore, unless there is a compelling financial reason or community feeling against doing so, the College will provide complete access to the facilities of the Internet, the World Wide Web, and other electronic media.

It is realized that one aspect of the nature of these new media is that they are largely uncontrolled. The information found on the Web, for example, is not usually refereed, checked, or censored. The members of the B-W community will need to practice personal evaluation skills to choose what is appropriate from the information found there.

Content of Publicly-Available Material

Baldwin-Wallace will monitor the official B-W Web pages but not the pages of individual students, faculty, or staff. The content of materials posted on electronic facilities or opinions expressed by members of the B-W community shall not be assumed to be those of the institution and responsibility for it lies with the originators.

It should be noted that some speech (e.g. obscenity, libel) is NOT protected by the First Amendment and that some uses of information (e.g. plagiarism) and some Web activities (e.g. spamming, posting extremely high-activity pages) degrade the performance of the entire system, thus conflicting with the purpose of the facilities. Infractions of the law will be reported to the appropriate authorities and activities that interfere with the mission of the College may result in restricted or discontinued access to the facilities.

Members of the B-W community must also realize the nature of some electronic media (a Web site, for instance) is essentially public and that the audience for their electronic communications may well extend beyond the academic community, therefore, this should be kept in mind when regulating the content of such communications.

The following disclaimer must be included at the bottom of each faculty, staff, and student home page posted on the B-W Website: "The contents of this page are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of Baldwin-Wallace College."

Commercial Use of the Facilities

The facilities of the College are not to be used for the direct benefit of non-College organizations or businesses without the express written permission of an officer of the College. This includes the outside business interests of students, faculty, and staff. Members of the B-W community may not offer items or services for sale via B-W-owned Web pages unless all profits from the sales go to a College-sponsored organization. An exception includes the use of the "BW-Personal" listserv which allows faculty and staff to offer personal items for sale within the B-W community.

Misuse of the Shared Electronic Facilities

Members of the B-W community are expected to refrain from activities which interfere with the proper functioning of the College's computer systems or infringe on the rights of other members to make use of the shared information technology resources. Such activities include, for example:

- Any unauthorized attempt to modify computer equipment or peripherals owned by B-W
- Any unauthorized attempt to add, delete, or modify software (such as operating systems, compilers, utility routines, graphics, games, etc.) owned by B-W
- Attempted or actual use of accounts, files, or passwords without proper authorization from the owner
- Reading, copying, modifying, or deleting private files (including those belonging to any students, faculty, staff, or the College's administrative or academic files) without proper authorization
- Using the College's network to communicate messages to others that are excessive (SPAM), offensive, or obscene
- Attempting to crash the B-W servers, intranet, or public electronic networks
- Violating intellectual property rights or copyrights in data or programs
- Destruction, damage, or theft of equipment, software, or data belonging to the College
- Giving unauthorized persons access to B-W facilities by divulging passwords
- Establishing an individual wireless network on campus or connecting any device (other than a computer) to the network without authorization from the IT Department
- Using a B-W computer to duplicate any licensed or copyrighted software (whether owned by the College or not)

Disciplinary Procedures – Student Misuse

Suspected misuse of the facilities should be reported to the Director of Information Technology (or via a member of the IT Staff), who is authorized to determine if there has been a violation of policy or law. The Director will refer student violators to the Office of Judicial Affairs for resolution. Pending the outcome of the inquiry, access to the shared technology resources may immediately be restricted or suspended. In some cases, limited or monitored access will be provided to the facilities needed for college-related activities, such as classes. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the situation will be discussed with the person suspected to have caused the violation to see if a resolution can be made. If not, the matter will be turned over to the appropriate College or public authority. If the misuse seems to involve violations of local, state, or federal law, the appropriate authorities will be informed. If the problem is a violation of College policy or if misuse of the system is reducing the effectiveness of the facilities, the problem will be handled by the appropriate college entity. For specific details of the judicial review and grievance procedures for student violators, please refer to the Student handbook.

Disciplinary Procedures – Faculty or Staff Misuse

Suspected misuse of the provided technologies (e.g., storing illegal files, using the shared resources for non-B-W enterprise, or violating College policy by accessing Internet sites associated with pornography and/or gambling) will initiate immediate action. This may include suspension or termination of network access, deletion of illegal files, or similar measures as deemed appropriate by an officer of the College. For specific details of subsequent review and grievance procedures, faculty members should refer to the Faculty Handbook and staff members to the Employee Handbook.