



Responsible Use of Information Technology Resources

Statement of General Policy

Baldwin Wallace University 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 University in support of its business functions. Limited access is also extended to guests for the purpose of exchanging email and viewing web pages hosted by BW and members of its community.

Baldwin Wallace University also believes that a primary function of institutions of higher education is to foster the free investigation and discussion of ideas. Electronic media play an important role in this endeavor, along with traditional print and broadcast media. The same policies and protections govern these media. 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 University policies.

When a conflict arises between these multiple uses of technology resources, it must be realized that supporting the continued operation of the University 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 email, are considered to be as private as phone conversations. The upload and download of information shall be given the same level of privacy. Neither the University 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 University, or in extraordinary circumstances to protect the health and well-being of members of the community or the property or educational mission of Baldwin Wallace.

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

There may be times when a Baldwin Wallace IT staff may see the contents of someone's email 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

Baldwin Wallace University 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 BW 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 University will provide complete access to the facilities of the Internet and other electronic media.

Information found on the Internet is not widely controlled, checked, or censored. Members of the BW community are asked to practice good judgment in filtering what is appropriate from the information found there.

Content of Publicly-Available Material

Baldwin Wallace University will monitor the official BW Web pages but not the pages of individual students, faculty, or staff. The content of materials posted or opinions expressed by members of the BW 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 University may result in restricted or discontinued access to the facilities.

Members of the BW community must also realize the nature of some electronic media (a website, 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 BW website: "The contents of this page are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of Baldwin Wallace University."

Commercial Use of the Facilities

The facilities of the University are not to be used for the direct benefit of non-BW organizations or businesses without the express written permission of an officer of the University. This includes the outside business interests of students, faculty, and staff. Members of the BW community may not offer items or services for sale via BW-owned web pages unless all profits from the sales go to a BW 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 BW community.

Misuse of the Shared Electronic Facilities

Members of the BW community are expected to refrain from activities which interfere with the proper functioning of the University'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 BW
- Any unauthorized attempt to add, delete, or modify software (such as operating systems, compilers, utility routines, graphics, games, etc.) owned by BW
- 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 University's administrative or academic files) without proper authorization
- Using the University's network to communicate messages to others that are excessive (SPAM), offensive, or obscene
- Attempting to crash the BW 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 BW
- Giving unauthorized persons access to BW 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 BW computer to duplicate any licensed or copyrighted software (whether owned by the University or not)

Disciplinary Procedures – Student Misuse

Suspected misuse of the facilities should be reported to the CIO, who is authorized to determine if there has been a violation of policy or law. The CIO 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 University 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 BW 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-BW enterprise, or violating University 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 University. For specific details of subsequent review and grievance procedures, faculty members should refer to the Faculty Handbook and staff members to the Employee Handbook.