NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT ®

Policy on the responsible use of Information and Communication Technology, Networks and Information Resources at the North-West University

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Policy on the responsible use of Information and Communication Technology, Networks and Information Resources at the North-West University

1   Preamble

As a pre-eminent university in Africa, driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation, with a unique institutional culture based upon the values the University espouses, the North-West University has adopted this Policy on the responsible use of information and communication technology, networks and information resources on 16 March 2007.

2   Background and introduction

This policy replaces the previous policies on responsible use of ICT infrastructure and systems. It is intended to be more general in nature than previous policies, since the constant stream of changes in technologies, systems and applications would require frequent policy changes. It is also the first institution-wide ICT policy to be implemented, with the aim of creating a common basis for the formulation of rules and procedures on all campuses.

As a responsible-use policy, it primarily addresses every user or potential user of the ICT resources of North-West University.

3   Policy objectives

To ensure responsible use of Information and Communication Technology, Networks and Information Resources

To establish a policy framework for ICT-related rules and procedures to be formulated by the responsible ICT support structures, both institutionally and on campuses.

4   Policy statement and requirements

4.1   Information and communication technology resources and systems intended for University-related purposes,

It is the policy of the University to maintain access for its community to local, national and international sources of information and to provide an atmosphere that encourages access to knowledge and sharing of information. As a part of the physical and social learning infrastructure, the North-West University acquires, develops, and maintains information and communications technology and systems. These information and communication technology resources and systems are intended for University-related purposes, including direct and indirect support of the University's teaching and learning, research, and community engagement activities; of University administrative functions; of student and campus life activities; and of the free exchange of ideas among members of the University community and between the University community and the wider local, national, and world communities.

4.2   Information and communication technology resources and systems to be used with public accountability in accordance with applicable rules

It is the policy of the University that information resources will be used by members of its community with respect for the public trust through which they have been provided and in accordance with policy and rules established from time to time by the University and its operating units.

4.3 Cultivation of freedom of responsible endeavour and protection of intellectual property

In accordance with this policy, the University works to create an intellectual environment in which students and staff may feel free to create and to collaborate with colleagues both at the North-West University and at other institutions, without fear that the products of their intellectual efforts will be violated by misrepresentation, tampering, destruction and/or theft.

Access to the information resource infrastructure both within the University and beyond the campus, sharing of information, and security of the intellectual products of the community, all require that each and every user accept responsibility to protect the rights of the community.

4.4 Acceptance of civic duty of collaboration to curtail abuse of the Information and communication technology environment

To ensure the existence of this information resource environment, members of the University community will take actions, in co-operation with government agencies and other interested parties, to identify and to set up technical and procedural mechanisms to make the information technology environment at the North-West University and its internal and external networks resistant to disruption and/or misuse. In addition, since the information resources are not in unlimited supply, the University may apply reasonable measures to limit the use of resources so as not to consume an unreasonable amount of those resources or to interfere unreasonably with the activity of other users.

4.5 Limitation of use and authority to monitor use and act against abuse

Users are prohibited from using the information and communication resources for any purpose that may be in conflict with the University's Mission and Values Statement, for personal commercial purposes or for personal or other gain. Personal use of university computing resources for other purposes is permitted when such use does not compete for resources needed for official University work, does not interfere with the performance of the user's job or other University responsibilities, and is otherwise in compliance with this policy. The University may at any time and at its sole discretion impose further limits upon personal use.

In using these resources, the user acknowledges the University's right to monitor such use, and to take remedial management actions in case of violations of its policies, rules and procedures. However, such monitoring and management actions must be authorised in advance by the Institutional IT Director or his/her designees.

5 Responsibility for implementation, management and monitoring

The ICT Support Services Departments are jointly responsible to implement and enforce the policy. It is also the responsibility of each and every user of these resources to promote the spirit of the policy, and to ensure that the policy is respected and the rules are adhered to.

5.1 Rules

1. No member of the University community may assume another person's identity for any reason whatsoever.

2. No user may communicate or act under the guise, name, identification, email address, signature, or indicia of another person, or communicate under the rubric of an organisation, entity, or unit without possessing the authority to represent such body.

3. Where a user's work requires that such user act in someone else's role, that may only be done by the user using his/her own identity.

4. Any member of the University community who, without authorisation, accesses, uses, destroys, alters, dismantles or disfigures the University's information technologies, properties or facilities, including those owned by third parties, thereby threatens the atmosphere of increased access and sharing of information, threatens the security within which members of the community may create intellectual products and maintain records, and in light of the University's policy in this area, will be deemed to have engaged in unethical and unacceptable conduct.

5. Access to the networks and to the information technology environment at the North-West University is a privilege, and must be treated as such by all users of these systems.

6. Ability to access computing resources does not, by itself, imply authorisation to do so, and hence users must ascertain what authorisations are necessary and must obtain such authorisation before proceeding.

7. Accounts and passwords and other identification mechanisms may not, under any circumstances, be shared with, or used by, persons other than those to whom they have been assigned by the University.

8. The user accepts co-responsibility for the health and well-being of this resource in collaboration with all other users, and specifically to guard against abuses which disrupt and/or threaten the long-term viability of the systems at the North-West University and those beyond the University.

6   Enquiries

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