

# **SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY**

*A Member of the Texas State University System*

## **SRSU Policy: Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources**

**SRSU Policy ID: APM 7.04**

**Policy Reviewed by: Chief Information Officer**

**Approval Authority: Executive Cabinet**

**Approval Date: 3-12-2019**

**Next Review Date: 3-11-2024**

### **Purpose/Reason**

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) considers information technology a critical enabler in meeting its mission and has made significant investments in information technology assets and capabilities. Likewise, Texas Government Code, Chapter 2054, describes the information technology resources that support the operations of Texas public higher education institutions as “strategic assets belonging to the residents of the State of Texas” and that these resources must be managed “as valuable state resources” and in a fashion that assures their protection and availability for appropriate use by authorized individuals. Compliance with this policy contributes to the availability, protection, and appropriate use of the information technology resources of Sul Ross State University.

### **Policy Statement**

It is the policy of Sul Ross State University to afford broad access to information technology resources by students, faculty and staff for activities that are related to, support, and fulfill institutional mission. To guide the policies related to appropriate use of information technology resources, Sul Ross State University has set forth the following specific topics as statements on appropriate use of information technology resources.

### **Policy Specifics**

#### **1. General Guidelines and Principles**

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) provides each of its authorized users with a domain account, known as a LoboID, that facilitates access to the university’s information technology resources. In accepting a LoboID or any other access identifier, such as a Banner A-number or LoboCard for access control, the recipient agrees to abide by all applicable SRSU policies and legal statutes, including all federal, state, and local laws. SRSU reserves the right at any time to limit, restrict, or deny access to its information technology resources and to take disciplinary or legal action against anyone in violation of these policies or statutes.

Applicable university policies and procedures include all Sul Ross State University policy and procedure statements and departmental policies and procedures that address the usage of SRSU information technology resources. Also applicable are university policies prohibiting harassment, plagiarism, or unethical conduct. Laws that apply to the use of SRSU’s information technology resources include laws pertaining to theft, copyright infringement, insertion of malicious software into computer systems, and other computer-related crimes. This policy applies to all university information technology resources, whether administered centrally or departmentally, and regardless of where they reside.

SRSU provides information technology resources for the purpose of accomplishing tasks related to the university’s mission. SRSU faculty and staff are required to employ these resources as their first and preferred option for satisfying their business, research, or instructional needs. Thus, faculty and staff, in collaboration with the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Information Security Officer (ISO), should engage third-party providers only after determining that university-provided resources are unable to fill the business, research, or instructional need.

SRSU’s information technology resources are not a public forum.

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Sul Ross State University considers e-mail a significant information technology resource and an appropriate mechanism for official university communication. The university provides official university e-mail addresses and services to its students, faculty, staff, retirees, and organizational units to enhance the efficiency of educational and administrative processes. In providing these services, the university anticipates that e-mail recipients will access and read university communications in a timely fashion. There should be no expectation of access to accounts or email messages by the account holder or any other person associated with the account holder once an individual separates from the Sul Ross community by graduating, no longer attending classes, termination of employment, death, or any other reasons for separation.

SRSU's information technology resources are subject to monitoring, review, and disclosure. Consequently, users should not expect privacy in their use of SRSU's information technology resources, even in the case of user's incidental personal use.

Computer software purchased or licensed by the university is the property of the university or the company from whom it is licensed. Any unauthorized access, use, alteration, duplication, destruction, or disclosure of any of these assets may constitute a computer-related crime, punishable under Texas and federal statutes.

## **2. Institutional vs. Individual Purpose**

Access to information technology resources carries with it the responsibility for ensuring that the use of these resources is primarily for institutional purposes and institution-related activities, and for maintaining the integrity and security of the institution's computing facilities. In the interest of making the use of information technology resources a natural part of the day-to-day work for all members of the SRSU community, incidental personal use is allowed, subject to review and reasonable restrictions by the employee's supervisor. Such personal use must not violate any applicable policies and statutes, must not interfere with the employee's job performance, and must not result in any additional expense to the university. Information technology resources are not to be used in an extensive or regularly recurring manner for activities that are unrelated to institutional purposes. Individuals with authorized access to information technology resources must ensure that their access permissions are not accessible to, transferable to, or usable by any other individuals.

## **3. Personal vs. Official Representation**

Information technology resources are a dynamic mechanism for the free exchange of knowledge. It is desirable for SRSU to foster the robust dialogue that results from the use of the resources and to encourage students, faculty and staff to participate in that dialogue. Those exchanges that reflect the ideas, comments and opinions of individual members of the SRSU community must, however, be distinguished from those that represent the official positions, programs and activities of SRSU. Students, faculty and staff using information technology resources for purposes of exchanging, publishing or circulating official institutional documents must follow institutional requirements concerning appropriate content and style. SRSU is not responsible for the content of documents, exchanges or messages, including links to other information locations on the internet or world wide web, that reflect only the personal ideas, comments and opinions of individual members of the SRSU community, even where they are published or otherwise circulated to the public at large by means of SRSU information technology resources.

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## **4. Limitations on the Availability of Information Technology Resources**

Sul Ross State University's information technology resources are finite by nature. All members of the SRSU community must recognize that certain uses of institutional information technology resources may be limited or regulated as required to fulfill SRSU's primary teaching, research and public service missions. Examples of these limitations include those related to capacity management, performance optimization, or security of the institution's information technology resources.

## **5. Privacy and Confidentiality of Electronic Documents**

No information technology resource can absolutely guarantee the privacy or confidentiality of electronic documents. More importantly, information technology resources provided by SRSU are owned by the State of Texas and subject to state oversight. Information technology resources include all of the following:

- a. all physical and logical components of the university's wired and wireless network infrastructure;
- b. any device that connects to or communicates electronically via the university's network infrastructure, including computers, printers, and communication devices, both portable and fixed, regardless of funding source or ownership;
- c. any fixed or portable storage device or media, regardless of ownership, that contains university data;
- d. all data created, collected, recorded, processed, stored, retrieved, displayed or transmitted using devices connected to the university network;
- e. all computer software and services licensed by the university; and
- f. support staff and services employed or engaged by the university to deploy, administer, or operate the above-described resources or to assist the university community in effectively using these resources.

Consequently, persons that use these state-owned resources or any personally owned or third-party device that may be connected to a state-owned resource, have no right to privacy in their use of these resources and devices.

SRSU takes reasonable precautions to protect the privacy and confidentiality of electronic documents and persons using SRSU information technology resources. The institution will not seek non-consensual access to information technology resources, including electronic messages or documents, without the user's prior consent, except where necessary to:

- Satisfy the requirements of the Texas Public Information Act, or other statutes, laws or regulations;
- Allow institutional officials to fulfill their responsibilities when acting in their assigned capacity;
- Protect the integrity of the institution's information technology resources, and the rights and other property of the institution;
- Allow system administrators to perform routine maintenance and operations, security reviews and respond to emergency situations; or
- Protect the rights of individuals working in collaborative situations where information and files are shared.

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Procedures and forms for non-consensual access are maintained in the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

## **6. Enforcement and Recourse**

- The university considers any violation of acceptable use principles or guidelines to be a serious offense and reserves the right to test and monitor security, including copying and examining any files or information resident on university computer systems allegedly related to unacceptable use.
- Any device found to be in violation of this policy, or found to be causing problems that may impair or disable the network in any way is subject to immediate disconnection from the university's network. The CIO or designee may require specific security improvements where potential security problems are identified.
- Attempting to circumvent security or administrative access controls for information technology resources is a violation of this policy. This includes but is not limited to attaching unregistered devices to the network; sharing passwords; leaving systems unattended that are logged into security sensitive servers; unauthorized monitoring of the network; and assisting someone else or requesting someone else to circumvent security or administrative access controls.
- Persons responsible for policy violations are subject to action in accordance with student, faculty and staff disciplinary policies and procedures and possible prosecution from local, state and federal authorities.
- To preserve and protect the integrity of information technology resources, there may be circumstances where SRSU must immediately suspend or deny access to the resources. Should an individual's access be suspended under these circumstances, the institution shall strive to inform the individual in a timely manner and afford the individual an opportunity to respond. The institution shall then determine what disciplinary action is warranted and shall follow the procedures established for such cases.

## **Scope and Applicability**

This policy statement applies to all persons and organizations that manage or use information technology resources belonging to Sul Ross State University.

## **Definitions**

**Information Technology Resources** include any of the following that are owned or supplied by Sul Ross State University: usernames or computer accounts, hardware, software, communication networks and devices connected thereto, electronic storage media, related documentation in all forms. Also included are data files resident on hardware or media owned or supplied by SRSU regardless of their size, source, author, or type of recording media, including e-mail messages, system logs, web pages and software.

## **Authority and Responsibility**

Questions related to this policy statement should be addressed to the Chief Information Officer or a member of the SRSU Executive Committee.

Students, faculty and staff are responsible for understanding and observing these and all other applicable policies, regulations and laws in connection with their use of Sul Ross State University's information technology resources.