

Title/Topic: Use of Electronic Mail
Number: 6.15
Functional Classification: Information Technology
Monitoring Unit: Information Technology Services
Initially Issued: August 2007
Last Revised:
Last Reviewed:

USE OF ELECTRONIC MAIL

PURPOSE

This Policy Statement applies to all users of the Louisiana State University (“LSU” or the “University”) electronic mail (e-mail) system regardless of affiliation, and irrespective of whether accessed from on-campus or off-campus locations, whether hosted on-campus or outsourced. Expressly, this policy applies to any user who has an LSU e-mail address (@*.lsu.edu). Specifically, this Policy Statement establishes important guidelines and restrictions regarding any and all use of e-mail at LSU, including retention and retraction of e-mail. E-mail has become a valuable tool for accomplishing the University's daily academic, educational, public service, and research initiatives, and is an official means for communication within the University. Messages must be composed in ways that reduce the possibility of ambiguity or confusion as to destination, intent or source.

In addition, e-mail is continuously being stored, accessed, and transmitted electronically, which increases the risk of unauthorized access, disclosure, or modification of *data* contained within e-mail messages. Everyone associated with providing and using e-mail must be diligent in their protection of *data*, use of *computing resources*, and compliance with PS06.05 (PS-107) and other policies and directives. **Ordinary e-mail must NOT be considered a secure method for transmitting *protected information*.**

As outlined in PS06.05 (PS-107), violations of this policy may result in sanctions, such as terminating access to *computing resources*, disciplinary action up to and including separation from the University, civil liability, and/or criminal sanctions.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy Statement, the following definitions shall apply:

Computing resources: shall be defined as all devices (including, but not limited to, personal computers, laptops, PDAs and smart phones) owned by the University, the user or otherwise, which are part of or are used to access (1) the LSU network, peripherals, and related equipment and software; (2) *data* communications infrastructure, peripherals, and related equipment and software; (3) voice communications infrastructure, peripherals, and related equipment and software; (4) and all other associated tools, instruments, facilities, and the services that make use of any technology resources owned, operated, or controlled by the University. *Computing resources* or components

thereof may be individually assigned or shared, single-user or multi-user, stand-alone or networked, and/or mobile or stationary.

Data: shall include all information that is used by or belongs to the University or that is processed, stored, maintained, transmitted, copied on, or copied from University *computing resources*.

Forged communications: (sometimes referred to as "spoofing") shall be defined as e-mails that are made to appear as if they originated from an organization or individual other than the individual from whom the message was actually sent.

Protected information: shall be defined as *data* that has been designated as private, protected, or confidential by law or by the University. *Protected information* includes, but is not limited to, employment records, medical records, student records, education records, personal financial records (or other individually identifiable information), research *data*, trade secrets, and classified government information. *Protected information* shall not include public records that by law must be made available to the general public. To the extent there is any uncertainty as to whether any *data* constitutes *protected information*, the *data* in question shall be treated as *protected information* until a determination is made by the University.

GENERAL POLICY

The official means of electronic communication by the University to faculty, staff, and students shall be the individual's LSU (@lsu.edu) e-mail address. Rerouting of information (i.e. links, attached files, etc.) cannot, and will not be guaranteed beyond the LSU primary e-mail gateway if a user has created a forwarding address to a departmental server, or an off-site Internet Service Provider (ISP) account.

LSU e-mail users are required to comply with federal and state law, University policies, and standards of professional and personal ethics and conduct. All communications sent via e-mail shall be consistent with applicable administrative policies, including, but not limited to, PS06.05 (PS-107) and PS06.10 (PS-114).

Individuals to whom LSU e-mail accounts are assigned are responsible for managing and monitoring their accounts, and for actions taken with their accounts. Accounts and account passwords are not to be sold, rented, transferred, or shared with any other person.

Unless an individual or an organization has explicitly solicited anonymous comments or input, all communications sent using any LSU technology service or facility must clearly identify the actual sender by a valid address in the basic header or in the message text. The deliberate creation or facilitation of misleading or *forged communications* is prohibited under any circumstance.

No one may imply or state in an e-mail that they represent or speak on behalf of LSU, or any organizational element of LSU, unless they are empowered to do so by virtue of their assigned duties or they have been formally authorized by the University.

Protected institutional and personal information shall not be sent via e-mail, unless specific steps are taken to ensure that the transmission or content of the e-mail is secure and encrypted in accordance with University standards, and the personal information therefore provided this additional level of protection.

Backups of e-mails stored on central University e-mail servers managed by ITS and messages marked as deleted held in retention by the central system shall be retained by the University for 7-days.

All mailing lists supported by University resources shall be owned and sponsored by a unit or individual employed or enrolled as a student by LSU. By agreeing to own or sponsor a University mailing list, the owner/sponsor assumes the responsibility of day-to-day monitoring and operation of the list. Communications to mailings lists shall be in accordance with the stated purpose and policy, and list members who experience inappropriate or unwanted postings may unsubscribe even if membership was initially required. Requests from individuals to be unsubscribed from these and from voluntary lists must be honored. Please see ["Guidelines for LISTSERV Usage"](#) for additional information on mailing lists.

Eligibility

The use of a University e-mail account is a privilege granted by the University, in its sole discretion, to facilitate the University's mission. No student employee or other person or entity has a right to a University e-mail account. University e-mail accounts (@*.lsu.edu) shall be provided to active faculty, staff, and students in support of University operations and initiatives. When an individual's affiliation with the University ends, eligibility to use a University provided e-mail account also ends. The University may elect to continue the account for use by the individual as necessary to further University missions. However, the eligibility of these individuals requires initial and periodic verification of need by a Dean, Director, or Department Head. Requests must be submitted in writing to the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and accompanied by the reason, name, and contact information of the sponsoring Dean, Director, or Department Head and the length of time for which the access will be required.

Naming Convention

As with any and all official communication that carries the LSU name, it is important that users be cognizant that the University image is always under scrutiny and that an identified, regulated standard for assigning e-mail accounts is necessary. Employees and affiliated individuals who are granted an LSU e-mail account will receive an address in a format determined by the University that is distinguishable, as well as unique. In e-mail systems where self selection of account names is offered as a feature of the service,

individuals are responsible for using discretion in their selection. The use of obscenities, vulgarities, or offensive words or phrases, both explicit and implied, as determined in the discretion of the University, may be deleted and the account holder referred to the authority governing the account holder. Several departments/units on campus manage their own e-mail servers. Without eliminating them entirely, this policy will set forth guidelines that the administrators of such machines must follow for the continued delivery of e-mail across the LSU gateway routers.

- Managers of departmental e-mail servers who assign e-mail addresses and aliases such as first.initial.surname@unit.lsu.edu will be responsible for assigning IDs that are distinguishable and unique.
- Departments that maintain their own e-mail server will continue to have their mail delivered to the department by the mail gateway as long as the names conform to this policy. Users can log into the primary account and set up forwarding to their departmental account with a forwarding address.
- All departmental e-mail servers must be registered with Information Technology Services (ITS) in order to send/receive e-mail through the University network. Mail servers can be registered by sending an e-mail to mtaregister@lsu.edu with the IP address and manager of the departmental e-mail server.

Retraction

Messages sent via University e-mail shall not be retracted by the information technology organization without an official request from a Dean, Director, or Department Head. Such requests must be submitted in writing to the Chief Information Officer, or his designee. However, such retractions do not guarantee that an unintended message will not be read, as once such messages are routed to the Internet beyond the boundaries of the University network, the feasibility of effecting a retraction is nil. Retractions are only effective in those limited cases where the sender and receiver are on the LSU-maintained e-mail system, and such messages have not been opened by the recipient.

Account Retention

Procedures:

- Graduating Students: E-mail account shall be purged after one inactive Spring or Fall semester following graduation.
- Students who have resigned: E-mail account shall be disabled after one inactive semester and purged after non-enrollment for two consecutive inactive semesters.
- Faculty/Staff who have resigned: E-mail account shall be terminated on date of departure from the university.
- Faculty/Staff who have retired: E-mail account shall be retained as long as the account is actively being used.

Note: For persons who have been employees of the University, their PAWS account and access to PAWS applications shall, in most cases, persist for up to 18 months for financial and tax purposes.

Mail Storage and Retention

Each University e-mail account has a designated and limited amount of server side storage. A warning message will be sent to the user when 90% of the mailbox storage limit is reached. If the user reaches the designated amount of server side storage for e-mail, they will no longer be able to send new messages. Once a user exceeds the designated amount of server side storage for e-mail, the user will no longer be able to send or receive e-mail, and any messages sent to the user's mailbox will be rejected. Users that require additional storage space can utilize Personal Folders to archive the additional e-mail to files on desktops and departmental servers. **University employees should archive all e-mails which constitute public records and retain them for three (3) years from creation. Duplicates need not be retained. Public records relating to purchases under the Procurement Code are required to be retained for six (6) years.**

Privacy and Applicability of Laws and Policies

This policy clarifies the applicability of law and certain other University policies to e-mail. Users are reminded that usage of LSU's *computing resources*, including e-mail, is subject to all University policies. The University encourages the use of e-mail, respects the privacy of users, and does not wish to inspect or monitor e-mail routinely, or to be the arbiter of its contents. Nonetheless, e-mail and data stored on the University's network of computers is the property of the University and is accessed by the University for the following purposes:

- Routine backups
- Troubleshooting hardware and software problems
- Preventing unauthorized access and system misuse
- Retrieving business related information*
- Investigating potential violation of University policy or local, state or federal law*
- Complying with legal requests for information*
- Rerouting or disposing of undeliverable mail
- Conducting University business
- Other purposes deemed necessary by the Office of the Chief Information Officer, with Provost's approval.

*Approval required by one or more of the following University parties: University Counsel, Human Resource Management, Law Enforcement, and Internal Audit. The extent of the access will be limited to what is reasonably necessary to acquire the information.

Individual users should have no expectation of personal privacy or confidentiality for documents and messages stored on University-owned equipment or systems. Users of

e-mail services must be aware that even if the sender and recipient have discarded their copies of an e-mail record, there might be back-up copies of such e-mail that can be retrieved.

E-mail may constitute a public record like other documents subject to disclosure as such or as a result of litigation. However, prior to any such disclosure, the University must evaluate all requests for information for compliance with applicable federal and state law. Any public records requests or subpoenas or other court orders which could include your e-mail should be sent to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administrative Services for evaluation. At any time you may be directed by the University to hold, preserve, and/or copy electronic mail as such may pertain to existing or potential litigation. If such a directive is received you shall not alter or delete any covered electronic mail or files.

PROCEDURES

All security incidents or concerns regarding this or other technology policies must be reported immediately to security@lsu.edu. After verification is complete using system or other logs, and in accordance with other applicable policies and procedures, the incident will be reported to the appropriate Dean, Director, or Department Head for review and possible action.

Questions or comments regarding this policy statement should be submitted, in writing, to the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

SOURCES

PS-1 Equal Opportunity
PS-10 Internal and External Communications/Advertisements
PS-30 Privacy Rights of Students (Buckley Amendment)
PS-40 Employee Records Confidentiality
PS-107 Computer Users' Responsibilities
PS-113 Social Security Number Policy
PS-114 Security of Computing Resources
Code of Student Conduct
PM-36 Louisiana State University System Information Security Plan
S.B. 205 (signed into law July 12, 2005; effective January 1, 2006, Act 499)