



## **Information Technology Systems**

### **WCC Electronic Mail (E-Mail) Policy**

Wytheville Community College (WCC) participates in a range of computing networks. Many members of the college community including Faculty, Staff, and Students use electronic mail (e-mail) in their day-to-day activities. E-mail services for Faculty & Staff are provided on WCC-owned computing and networking systems to further the college's mission of research, instruction, and public service. E-mail services are also considered a conditional employee benefit and may be utilized for personal messages subject to the limitations set forth in these and other applicable policies, and to the extent that personal usage does not interfere with assigned responsibilities. Use of e-mail should be consistent with this mission and this policy.

Acceptable use of WCC's electronic communications environment is based on common sense, common decency, and civility.

Communications in this medium are protected by the same laws and policies, and are subject to the same limitations, as communications in other media. Users should, however, exercise extreme caution when committing confidential information to electronic media because the confidentiality of such material cannot be guaranteed. For example, e-mail messages can be saved indefinitely on the receiving computer. Copies can easily be made and forwarded to others either electronically or on paper. Messages sent to nonexistent or incorrect user names are delivered to a person designated as Postmaster for either the remote or local site. Routine maintenance or system administration of a computer may result in the contents of files and communications being seen (network and system administrators are, however, expected to treat the contents of electronic files as private and confidential).

Under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), electronic files are considered the same as paper files. Any official WCC documents (as defined by law) in the files of employees of the Commonwealth of Virginia are considered public documents, and may be subject to inspection through FOIA unless exempted by law. In such cases, the campus Freedom of Information Officer should inspect files to determine which portions may be exempt from disclosure. Any inspection of electronic files and any action based upon such inspection will be governed by all applicable U. S. and Virginia laws and by WCC policies.

Access to the information technology environment in general and electronic mail in particular, at WCC is a privilege and must be treated as such by all users of these systems. Like any other college facility, abuse of these privileges can be a matter of legal action or official disciplinary procedures. Depending on the seriousness of an offense, violation of the policy can result in penalties ranging from written warning (i.e., don't do this any more), to loss of access, to referral to appropriate WCC and/or VCCS authorities for disciplinary action. In a case where unacceptable use severely impacts performance or security, in order to sustain reasonable performance and secure services for the rest of the user community, Information Technology Services (ITS) will immediately suspend an individual's access privileges.

Mass mailings are permitted, but need to follow these guidelines:

- Mass mailings for more than 100 users need to have:
  - a) Vice President of Instruction & Student Services (or designee) approval for distribution to students (only required if students are outside of the sender's academic area of responsibility) and/or

b) Vice President Finance and Administration (or designee) approval for distribution to employees (only required if the distribution is to include employees outside of the sender's area of responsibility).

- Include the content within the message itself as opposed to attaching it if possible.
- Send out a web-based link to the source for any high-resolution graphics, streaming content, or any material that would increase the message size dramatically.

Unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Using e-mail for any purpose that violates federal or state laws.
- Using e-mail for commercial purposes.
- Misrepresenting your identity or affiliation in e-mail communications.
- Sending patently harassing, intimidating, abusive, or offensive material to or about others.
- Intercepting, disrupting, or altering electronic communications packets.
- Using someone else's identity and password.
- Causing congestion on the network by propagating chain letters, broadcasting inappropriate messages to lists or individuals, or using an excessive amount of data storage in the e-mail post office.
- Assigning a priority of "high" to a mass mailing.

Policy established: 12/28/2007