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Policy 5.7
Peer-to-Peer File Sharing Policy

Responsible Official: VP for Information Technology & CIO
Administering Division/Department: Office of Information Technology
Effective Date: March 31, 2007
Last Revision: March 15, 2011

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Overview

This policy explains Emory's official position on peer-to-peer file sharing utilities.

Applicability

This policy applies to anyone using a peer-to-peer file sharing utility on the Emory network.

Policy Details

Definition

Peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing is a method of sharing or distributing digital files over a network where each computer participating in the peer-to-peer file sharing network is allowed to act as either a client or server (or both). Using peer-to-peer file sharing software each participant is allowed to download or share files directly with one another, usually without the need for a dedicated central server. The peer-to-peer file sharing method may be utilized when no centralized file source is available, when participants wish to distribute the data transfer load, to increase the resiliency of distribution, or as a quick ad-hoc file sharing solution. Unfortunately, due to its decentralized nature, this innovative technology is frequently implicated in the illegal sharing and distribution of copyrighted materials such as digital music and movie files.

Restrictions on Usage

The official Emory position on peer-to-peer file sharing utilities such as BitTorrent, eDonkey, Gnutella, etc. is as follows:

- Peer-to-peer file sharing software itself is not illegal, nor is it banned at Emory. However, to reduce the interest in attackers acquiring unauthorized access to Emory systems and to help ensure accountability for peer-to-peer files haring activities, peer-to-peer protocols are blocked by default on all Emory networks.
- Those wishing to use peer-to-peer applications, outside of ResNet (Emory's Residential Network), for legitimate academic or business functions may request an exception to this policy.
- ResNet is not intended to enable Emory students to be Internet content providers. Therefore, all non-Emory users are blocked from connecting to computers on ResNet. Students using computers connected to ResNet can still send and receive email across the Internet, browse the web, and download applications or files. However, non-Emory users will not be allowed to connect to computers on ResNet to download applications or files. Computers on ResNet are

likewise prohibited from serving web pages or accepting ftp connections from non-Emory computers.
- Users of peer-to-peer applications on the Emory network are required to utilize such applications in a legal and ethical manner.
  - Users must not download or share copyrighted material for which they do not have explicit permission from the copyright holder. Emory abides by applicable laws regarding copyrights and copyright infringement, including handling infringement complaints received from copyright holders.
  - The Emory high-speed network is a shared resource provided for uses consistent with the University's missions of teaching, learning, research, and service and for related administrative support. Individuals must not abuse this resource by generating high volumes of network traffic that negatively impact the performance of the network or otherwise impede its use by others.

Sanctions

Failure to comply with this policy or applicable laws or regulations may result in:

- Removal of inappropriate material from the relevant IT resources
- Suspension or termination of access
- Disciplinary actions (up to an including termination of employment) in accordance with applicable university policy
- Civil or criminal prosecution

Related Links

- Current Version of This Policy: http://policies.emory.edu/5.7
- Emory IT Security webpage on copyright infringement (http://it.emory.edu/security/copyright.html)
- Information Technology Conditions of Use (http://policies.emory.edu/5.1)

Contact Information

Subject	Contact	Phone	Email
Clarification of policy	Brad Sanford	404-727-2630	brad.sanford@emory.edu

Revision History

- Version Published on: Mar 29, 2007 *(Revised to reflect current operational practices.)*
- Version Published on: Mar 29, 2007 *(Original Publication)*

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