Lesson 04: The Do's and Don'ts of Computers and Mobile Devices

Lesson Objectives:

- Student will identify potential abuse and unethical uses of computers, mobile devices, and networks.
- Student will explain the consequences of illegal, social, and unethical uses of information technologies (e.g., piracy; illegal downloading; licensing infringement; inappropriate uses of software, hardware, and mobile devices).

In this day and age, where technology greets us at every corner, be it in our home, car, or office, it can be hard to differentiate acceptable uses of your work computer from what you do on your computer at home. The purpose of this lesson is to alert you to some things you should not do while on a computer at work.

Downloading

Most work computers will have firewalls and other blocking mechanisms to keep employees from downloading programs from outside sources. If this is not the case, you should still avoid the temptation to download anything that is not beneficial to the job. While that internet connection speed at work might be excellent to download and play "Call of Duty" or "World of Warcraft," work is not the place to do this. Many employers can and will fire a person who downloads recreational programs to play during work time, so take note that doing something of this nature comes with high risks.

Peer to Peer

Not long ago, a tiny company by the name of Napster developed a peer to peer (P2P) program that allowed people to upload movies, games, music, and images to the internet for strangers to download. Since then many other peer to peer programs have popped up, such as Bearshare and Limewire.

Peer to peer programs create a special issue beyond the mere need to determine what materials are and are not appropriate for work. Material that is shared in a peer to peer program is not offered there by the creator of the material. The main reason a person should not use such a program is that it violates copyright laws. Copyright laws say that material is owned by its creator and only that entity (person, company, etc.) has the right to sell it or distribute

it. When you are getting material from someone other than its owner online, you are basically in possession of stolen property. One common issue with copyright law violations and peer to peer programs is the downloading of music someone has not purchased. In the 2000s, Metallica took on Napster and its many users, suing for money not received with the free/illegal downloads of their songs. Other bands also took part, suing individuals regardless of age.

Using programs like this to get your media fix can prove not only detrimental to you, but also to your employer. Internet service providers will disconnect your internet if it is found that you are downloading large amounts of files through P2P programs. Those who own legal copyrights to your downloads may also sue you and your employer for lost profit. Since your employer is also at legal risk if you do this, most employers have strict policies forbidding this kind of use of their internet. Your employer is likely to take disciplinary measures or even fire you if you download anything from peer to peer sites, whether or not the material is appropriate.

E-mails and Instant Messaging

E-mail is a great way to communicate with co-workers, collaborate on documents, make office announcements, etc. There are three guidelines you should keep in mind when you are deciding what e-mails to send and whether to use an instant message applications:

1. When you are at work, you are likely being paid for your time. So your time during work hours belongs to your employer. Using your time for personal pursuits is the ethical equivalent of stealing.
2. Your co-workers are not your friends (at least during work hours, they are professional associates).
3. Everything you send over the internet becomes a potentially permanent record of the kind of employee you are, so it can affect your career.

These three general principles lead to several specific conclusions about what not to do when it comes to e-mails and instant messaging:

- Do not forward non-work-related e-mails to your co-workers during work hours or using business e-mail servers or addresses. (Common temptations to avoid are chain letters, jokes, inspirational messages, etc.)
- Do not use instant messaging programs to chat with friends or family during work hours about non-work related issues. Only use instant messaging if it helps you communicate with co-workers in other offices about professional needs (example of acceptable use: "What format did you use on part 1 of the report? I am working on part 2 and want to be consistent." example of not acceptable use: "Isn't the boss a jerk?")
- Do not write personal e-mail letters at work.
- Do not download attachments from your e-mail without first scanning them for viruses. (Refer to lesson 2 for a discussion about malware and virus scanning programs.)

- Use formal, grammatically correct language in work-related e-mails. Avoid slang, text messaging short cuts (example: R U done w/ prt 1 of reprt?), and offensive language.
- Read over everything before you click "send."

NSFW

This acronym is contemporary slang for is Not Safe For Work. Many things can fall into this category, including photos or videos of a questionable nature, or music containing language that your co-workers find offensive. This applies not only to downloading material on your computer at work, but also to viewing internet sites, e-mails, material brought from home, etc. Remember that anything you see on your screen, your co-workers could potentially see. Anything you hear through your speakers (even headphones), your co-workers could potentially hear. Anything you send to the printer, your co-workers could accidentally pick up. Therefore, any materials you display in any way needs to be appropriate to the office setting.

Remember people in your office might have different values, sensitivities, and beliefs than you. What may seem completely normal to you, might unintentionally offend someone else. Since offending people isn't good for your career, try to develop an awareness of how not to do it, even accidentally. Here is a list of some criteria for what might be offensive when displayed visually or auditorily on your computer. Note that this is not a complete list, but intended to get you thinking.

- nudity
- violence
- curse words
- 'gross-outs'
- derogatory slang about a particular race, gender, sexuality, disability, etc. (example: racial slurs)
- depictions of negative stereotypes about a particular race, gender, sexuality, disability, culture, etc. (example: a cartoon drawing of an African American man as half-ape)
- excessively religious material if you work in a secular company.
- any material that is degrading to or makes fun of any group.
- material that depicts someone in an overtly sexual way (example: a picture of a female posed in a bikini or slinky dress, or a picture of a man posed without a shirt)

If you repeatedly offend somebody at your workplace with the material displayed on, or sent from, your computer, you could be guilty of harassment. This can even result in legal measures taken against you. Always be respectful of the people around you.

Grading Rubric:

Your grade will be calculated by the sum of the points earned for each question. Points are earned according to the chart below.

To get a 10: A total score of 10 on your first submission, or within the first revision.

To get a 9: A total score of 9 or more after your first revision.

To get an 8: A total score of 8 or more after your first revision.

To get a 7: A total score of 7 or more after your first revision.

To get a 6: A total score of 6 or more after your first revision.

To get a 5: Plagiarism – purposeful or mistaken, which will lower your final grade for the course (So, be very careful when posting your work!); lack of effort, disrespect, or attitude. Lesson requirements have not been met.

Apply Your Knowledge (total points 10)	Ideas are expressed clearly and in an organized way. Details support the responses. Responses answer all questions. **2 points each**	Ideas are expressed and organized but details are lacking. More information is needed to create a clear idea. Responses answer most questions but some information is missing. **1 point each**	There is no clearly stated idea or organization to the responses. Reponses are general and lacking details or specifics. Many questions are left unanswered. **0 points each**

Assignment:

Do not submit text that you have copied from sources, including websites. All of your work should be in your own words. Using copied text would be considered plagiarism. For more information, review our page on Plagiarism and Citation.

Apply Your Knowledge

1) Do some internet research. Be sure to cite your sources.

- Define piracy as related to computers/technology.
- Give an example of piracy.
- Cite your sources.

2) This lesson is called "The Do's and Don'ts of Computers and Mobile Devices," but it focuses mainly on the "don'ts." Now you come up with a list of Work Computer Do's.

- Create a list of 5 items you should always remember to do with your work computer.
- In a paragraph of 3-5 sentences, explain why these items are important to remember to do.

3) What uses of your work computer are illegal?

- What could the consequences of these uses be?

4) Imagine you are the IT manager (information technology) at a large company. You are given the task to block certain websites from being accessible on the company's Internet.

- Create a list of 5 specific websites you would block. Keep in mind that your goal will be to increase employees' productivity and minimize threats to the network.
- Explain in 2-3 sentences for each site why this should be blocked from the company's Internet.

5) Mobile devices are common these days and make technology transportable allowing people to work and interact with others from anywhere. Click here and watch:

Mobile Devices and Security then answer the following questions.

- List and describe three main ways criminals can access information from mobile devices.
- How do mobile operating systems help protect your mobile devices?
- What are some precautions you can take in the event you lose your mobile device or it was stolen?
- Before selling or trading in your mobile device, why is it important to do a factory reset?