Internet Bandwidth Usage - Best Practices

Colleges continue to struggle to manage internet bandwidth (both availability and cost).

Users may not know that the college pays for connectivity to the internet and for the amount of internet bandwidth we consume throughout the day. Our consumption of internet bandwidth continues to out run our projections and budgets. In reviewing use patterns, traffic types and performance problems, it is important to remind people of appropriate use of state resources (internet services).

Like most state resources, the computers, networks and internet are "For Official Use Only". Some of the traffic that we are seeing may not fit the official state use guidelines. Hopefully, the following examples will help people distinguish the types of traffic that might not fit the "Official Use" profile and be inappropriate for the state and college networks.

Can I run different streaming technologies in the classroom? Yes, streaming a webinar, video clip or other types of content into the classroom as part of the class materials is fine. Can I watch the latest movies as they become available on the internet? Using the internet connection for entertainment purposes would not meet the official use criteria.

Can I run internet radio in my office? No, using these resources for entertainment would not be considered a legitimate use of state resources. Can I demonstrate the use of internet radio in my computer information systems or multi-media class? Yes, academic use is appropriate.

Can I log into EBAY to create and watch my personal bids while I am on campus? This wouldn't fit the "Official Use" Profile.

Can I get continuous feeds of stock quotes off the internet? This does not fit the "Official Use" Profile unless it is for use in the classroom or to prepare classroom materials.

Can I make internet stock trades from my work PC? No, you should not be making personal financial transactions or conducting personal business using college resources.

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Can I download music from the internet? No, not usually. In rare instances you can but there are strict use and copyright restrictions. Please contact media services if you have questions about what can be used.

Can I conduct personal business over the internet during my lunch and break time? The rules remain the same regardless of when you use state resources. The state ethics board does allow for de minimis use of state resources.

Generally, the state permits use of resources for personal use if it doesn't increase costs, it is infrequent in nature, and it doesn't impact the productivity of the employee.

There are lots of fun things out on the internet. Is it ok for me to sign up for “the joke of the day?” No, the joke of the day would be considered entertainment. Additionally, anything you sign up for on the internet and give your email address to will likely “sell” your email address to other marketing companies and this will highly increase your volume of spam.

Some examples of de minimis use:

Occasionally an old colleague sends me an email to my work address. Is it ok to correspond with this person? Yes, there would be minimal costs to the college and it is infrequent.

Occasionally, I need to go to my health insurance web site to look to see if I have exceeded my benefits for the year. Would this be considered de minimis? Yes, there would be minimal costs to the college and it is infrequent.

Almost daily, I get a short email from my son or daughter that is attending college out of state. Is this de minimis use? Yes, there would be minimal costs to the college and it is infrequent.

I coach a little league team and every spring I take digital pictures of my team. Is it ok to email them to my OC email box so I can print them at work? No, the printing costs would not be considered de minimis.