
Subject: Policy for Protecting University Information in Digital Form

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1. Purpose

Virginia Tech is committed to ensuring the proper handling of the information that it collects and uses to carry out its missions. The purpose of this policy is to safeguard university information from unauthorized disclosure and inappropriate use when used in digital form.

2. Policy

All university information must be handled with an appropriate level of security when used in conjunction with electronic information systems to protect against unauthorized access, alteration, or disclosure. Such security is required to minimize the potential for physical, financial, or reputational harm to the university or to one or more of its faculty members, staff members, students, alumni, friends, or business partners.

The focus of this policy is on university information that exists in a digital format, whether stored in a database, used in an application, or used in a report. All appropriate measures must be taken to hold university information securely through its creation, storage, transmission, use, and deletion.

2.1 Scope

This policy applies to all **university information** in, or derived from, digital form. University information includes information collected by or used by university personnel in the conduct of their university responsibilities. It includes information collected and used for learning, discovery, engagement, support, and administration. University information in digital form may exist in a variety of formats, ranging from highly structured elements in a database to unstructured, narrative information. University information includes information within the control of university personnel in the conduct of their job responsibilities, whether the information resides in university-owned digital systems or elsewhere. Further, university information may be gathered or used at the direction of the university but reside in applications hosted by vendors or other third parties.

3. Procedures

Standards and guidelines that help support this policy through specific considerations and tools are provided through the policy page on the website of the Vice President for Information Technology (www.it.vt.edu/administration/policies.html). Additional guidance is provided at the Sensitive Information Security website (www.security.vt.edu/sensitiveinfo.html).

3.1 Verification

Once a year, each university employee who has electronic or physical access to university sensitive information must affirm that they take appropriate security measures in accordance with policy, standards, and procedures. (See www.security.vt.edu/sensitiveinfo.html)

4. Definitions

Digital form refers to the technology of computers and data communications, and includes products of those systems, including printed reports.

Sensitive information includes all university information that could cause physical, financial, or reputational harm to the university or to members of the university community if released inappropriately. Under Policy 7100, data classified as university-internal or as limited-access may be sensitive information.

5. References

Board of Visitors' Resolution, June 4, 2007, "[Information Technology Security and Authority Resolution](#)"
(http://www.bov.vt.edu/minutes/07-06-04minutes/attach_v_070604.pdf)

[HB 1469 Identity theft; notice of database breach](#), approved by Governor to amend Chapter 801, effective 7/1/08
(<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?081+ful+CHAP0801>)

[Information Technology Security Standard](#) (www.it.vt.edu/publications/pdf/Security_Standards.pdf)

[University Policy 7010, Policy for Securing Technology Resources and Services](#) (www.policies.vt.edu/7010.pdf)

[University Policy 7100, Administrative Data Management and Access Policy](#) (www.policies.vt.edu/7100.pdf)

[University Policy 7200, University Information Technology Security Program](#) (www.policies.vt.edu/7200.pdf)

[University Policy 1060, Policy on Social Security Numbers](#) (www.policies.vt.edu/1060.pdf)

[Security Standards for Social Security Numbers](#)

(www.computing.vt.edu/administrative_systems/banner/security%20standards_5July05.pdf)

[University Policy 7025, Safeguarding Nonpublic Customer Information](#) (www.policies.vt.edu/7025.pdf)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

[Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act](#) (www.ftc.gov/privacy/glbact/glbsub1.htm)

[Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act](#) (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/admsimp/pl104191.htm>)

[Virginia Tech student privacy/FERPA](#) (www.registrar.vt.edu/records/ferpa.php)

6. Approval and Revisions

Approved July 1, 2008 by the Vice President for Information Technology, Earving L. Blythe.

June 16, 2009: Technical corrections to hyperlinks.