USE OF COMPUTERS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICES, AND NETWORKS

I. Purpose

The Smithsonian Institution’s (SI) computers, telecommunications devices, and networks are to be used for Smithsonian-related work or work performed by approved partners and affiliated organizations. Users must understand the rules for using these resources appropriately, and their role in protecting these resources from unauthorized use.

II. Background

Information Technology (IT) Security is a critical element of risk management for all organizations today. As evidenced by the ever-growing list of high-profile and increasingly sophisticated security breaches profiled in the media, organizations are at high risk of attack from criminal activity, “hactivism,” espionage, insider threats, terrorism, and accidental self-imposed incidents, resulting in large financial losses, reputational damage, business disruption, and other serious consequences. Protecting the Smithsonian and the resources entrusted to it requires a concerted effort and relies on the cooperation of all Smithsonian personnel who must understand how they fit into and affect the Institution’s overall IT security posture.

An important aspect of IT Security is ensuring that everyone at the Smithsonian understands not only the security policies that apply to them, but also their own role in maintaining IT Security, and the consequences of non-compliance. Smithsonian personnel must have an understanding of the security risks in their IT environment and what they can and are expected to do to help protect the Smithsonian’s resources.
III. APPLICABILITY

This directive applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers, interns, visiting researchers, and other affiliated persons who use Smithsonian computers, telephones, mobile devices, software applications, storage drives, websites, data, printers/copiers, and networks, including all hardware connected to Smithsonian computers and networks. The directive does not apply to public use of external-facing websites or use of guest WiFi networks by visitors from the general public.

IV. DEFINITIONS

A. **Affiliated Persons** — For purposes of this directive, the term “Affiliated Persons” is defined as the following: (i) contractors who perform work similar to Smithsonian employees, such as employees of temporary help firms; (ii) volunteers, as defined in SD 208, Standards of Conduct Regarding Smithsonian Volunteers; (iii) interns and Fellows, as defined in SDs 701, Smithsonian Institution Fellows, and 709, Smithsonian Institution Interns; (iv) emeriti, as defined in SD 206, Emeritus Designations; (v) Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center (SEEC) employees; (vi) visiting researchers, including scientists, scholars, and students; (vii) research associates, as defined in SD 205, Research Associates; (viii) employees of federal, state, and local agencies, approved partners or affiliated organizations working with SI employees at SI facilities and property; and (ix) Regents and Advisory Board members.

B. **Computer** — Any programmable electronic device, including servers, desktop and laptop computers, tablets, smartphones, and network devices, that can be used to input, process, or store information.

C. **Encryption** — Scrambling of data so that only someone with an access key can read it.

D. **Hardware** — Physical parts of computers and related devices. Examples include hard drives, processors, memory, monitors, keyboards, mice, and other input devices. The term “hardware” may also be used to refer to the devices themselves, such as desktop computers, laptops, servers, phones, tablets, storage devices, printers, copiers, and scanners.

E. **Mobile Device** — Any portable computer, such as a laptop, smartphone, tablet, or other portable device that can store or process data.

F. **Network** — A set of computers connected for the purpose of sharing resources.

G. **Passphrase** — Sequence of words or other text used in place of a password.
IV. DEFINITIONS (continued)

H. **Personnel** — Everyone who participates in the operation of the Smithsonian and the performance of its mission, including staff, contractors, volunteers, interns, Fellows, and other affiliated persons.

I. **Phishing** — The practice of sending fraudulent emails in order to induce individuals to reveal information or click on malicious links/attachments.

J. **Security Incident** — Any action that threatens the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of Smithsonian IT resources, whether located inside or outside of the Smithsonian, or any activity that violates Smithsonian IT Security policies. IT resources include computer hardware and software, data, communication links, mobile devices, digitized assets, automated processes, physical computing environments, and associated personnel.

K. **Sensitive Data** — Sensitive data includes personally identifiable information (PII), Payment Card Information (PCI), system access credentials, financial account information, security information, protected intellectual property, and other information whose access by the wrong people would be detrimental to the Smithsonian or its customers and stakeholders.

L. **Software** — The programs and instructions that run a computer, as opposed to the actual physical machinery and devices that make up the hardware. Examples include operating systems, internet browsers, browser extensions and plug-ins, business applications, productivity tools, software utilities, etc.

M. **Telecommunications Device** — Any electronic device used for communication over a network.

N. **User** — Anyone who accesses or makes use of Smithsonian computers, networks, and telecommunications devices.

V. POLICY

A. **Rules for Users**

**Rule 1: Do Not Expect Privacy**

The Smithsonian Institution’s computers, telecommunications devices, and networks are Smithsonian property and are to be used for Smithsonian-related work or work performed by
approved partners and affiliates. This provision applies without regard to the location of the Smithsonian computer or telecommunications device.

Emails, documents, text messages, voice mail, or other files or data created, transmitted, or received while using Smithsonian computers, telecommunications devices, or networks are the property of the Smithsonian.

Users should have no expectation of privacy in email (including private password-protected email accounts), internet usage, text messaging, voice mail, video/teleconferencing, system access, usage logs, or other files or data created, transmitted, or received while using Smithsonian computers, telecommunications devices, or networks.

The Smithsonian has the right to monitor the use of its computers, telecommunications devices, and networks, and may monitor, access, inspect, store, or disclose any emails, documents, text messages, voice mail, or other files or data created, transmitted, or received while using Smithsonian computers, telecommunications devices, or networks.

In addition, Smithsonian records are subject to the Institution’s records disclosure policy and may be publicly released in compliance with SD 807, Requests for Smithsonian Institution Information.

Incidental and occasional personal use is permitted, provided it does not interfere with the conduct of normal Institution business, does not cause expense or security risk to the Smithsonian, and meets the requirements of the other sections of this document. Such personal use does not create a user right of privacy, as any such personal use is subject to monitoring by the Smithsonian and the other provisions of Rule 1 described above.

**Rule 2: Sign User Agreement**

All users of Smithsonian computers, telecommunications devices, or networks must sign a user agreement (please see Appendix) before accessing a Smithsonian computer, telecommunications device, or network.

**Rule 3: Complete Security Awareness Training**

Personnel with an SI network account must complete the Smithsonian-approved online Computer Security Awareness Training (CSAT) annually, which includes reviewing and renewing acceptance of this directive. New users must complete this training within 30 days of SI account activation.

Personnel without an SI network account must complete Information Security Awareness Training (ISAT) annually.
V. POLICY (continued)

Personnel who perform IT management functions (such as development, administration, support, and security), as well as those people with elevated privileges on SI systems, may be required to complete additional role-based security training.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) periodically sends out computer security alerts, newsletters, and other awareness materials. Personnel are expected to review this information and apply it to their use of Smithsonian systems.

OCIO also periodically conducts phishing simulations to evaluate how susceptible personnel are to phishing and to determine the need for additional awareness training.

See IT-930-05, Computer Security Training & Awareness, for more information on security training and awareness requirements.

Rule 4: Provide Encryption Keys

Because data contained on Smithsonian computers, telecommunications devices, and networks are not private, users are required to provide their encryption keys on request to their supervisors, the Institution’s director of IT Security, or the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

Rule 5: Use Computers, Telecommunications Devices, and Networks Appropriately

Smithsonian users must not:

- harass or threaten other users or interfere with their access to Smithsonian computing or telecommunications facilities
- send, forward, or request racially, sexually, or ethnically offensive messages
- search for or use websites that involve hate groups or racially offensive or sexually explicit material
- seek, store, or transmit sexually explicit, violent, or racist images or texts
- send material that is slanderous or libelous or that involves defamation of character
- plagiarize
- send fraudulent email, texts, or other communications
- access computers, mailboxes, systems, or data for which they have not been authorized
V. POLICY (continued)

- intercept or otherwise monitor network communications without authorization

- misrepresent their real identity (e.g., by changing the From line in an email). This does not include instances where an individual was granted permission to send email from another individual’s account

- lobby an elected official

- promote a personal social, religious, or political cause, regardless of worthiness

- send or transfer malicious programs such as computer viruses, except for the forwarding of suspicious emails to the IT-Incident mailbox

- participate in gambling

- perform activities involving personal profit such as:
  
  — operating or promoting a personal business
  — performing paid work for another organization
  — online brokerage trading
  — selling personally owned items online, via email, or by phone
  — personal fund raising
  — performing any of the above-listed activities for a family member

- post personal opinions to a bulletin board, listserv, blog, social network, mailing list, or other external system using a Smithsonian user ID, except as part of official duties

- participate in activities that promote computer crime or misuse, including, but not limited to, posting or disclosing passwords, credit card and other account numbers, and system vulnerabilities

- violate any software licensing agreement or infringe upon any copyright or other intellectual property right

- disclose confidential or sensitive data without authorization

- create or maintain a personal website using Smithsonian computers, networks, and telecommunications devices
V. POLICY (continued)

- send mass mailings of a non-business nature

- send email announcements, other than those distributed by the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) or the Office of Public Affairs (OPA), to multiple groups that include most or all Smithsonian employees and affiliated persons. SD 112, Internal Smithsonian Announcements, provides guidance on Smithsonian-wide email announcements

- automatically forward Smithsonian email to a non-Smithsonian email account

- use any peer-to-peer file-sharing applications (such as BitTorrent)

- store Smithsonian sensitive data on personal devices, a personal cloud account, or a personal email account

- set up personal accounts on internet sites or services using Smithsonian account credentials, except where approved or instructed by OCIO

- use personal email accounts to conduct official Smithsonian business. If a personal email account is used, such as in emergency situations when Smithsonian accounts are not accessible or when a user is initially contacted through a personal account, the Smithsonian user must ensure that all Smithsonian records sent or received on personal email systems are forwarded to the person’s official Smithsonian email account and captured and managed in accordance with Smithsonian recordkeeping practices.

Rule 6: Avoid Overloading System Resources

Each user should carefully evaluate his or her use of computers, telecommunications devices, and networks and:

- avoid sending large email attachments unless there is a business need

- delete email messages and files that are no longer needed in accordance with the official record retention guidance issued to his or her museum, research center, or office

- not overtax processing and storage capabilities or restrict access by others

- minimize downloading or streaming of audio and video files, including the use of online videogames, unless work-related.
V. POLICY (continued)

Rule 7: Comply with Software and Hardware Requirements

Users may not download, purchase, or install software unless it has been approved for use in the Technical Reference Model (TRM), IT-920-01, maintained by OCIO, and can operate on computer equipment specified in the TRM. SD 940, Acquisition of Information Technology Products, provides guidance on acquiring IT products. If users install unapproved software, it may have security vulnerabilities they are unaware of that will expose their computer and the SI network to attack.

Personnel may only purchase approved models of computers and devices. This ensures that the Smithsonian computing infrastructure remains stable, secure, and reliable.

Users may not add hardware to a computer, modify system files or security settings, or delete standard software on a computer without prior OCIO or unit IT support staff approval.

Personnel are not allowed to connect any network infrastructure devices (such as switches, routers, or wireless access points) to the SI network without approval from OCIO or their unit IT manager.

Only SI-owned devices or devices configured to SI standards by SI IT personnel may be connected to the SI-Staff network. Users should ask OCIO or their unit IT manager for the appropriate network to connect personal devices belonging to employees and affiliated persons, visitors, contractors, and others.

Copyrighted and licensed materials may not be used on a computer, other hardware, SInet, or the internet unless legally owned by the Smithsonian or otherwise in compliance with intellectual property laws. Users must read and understand all license material included with software. Personally owned software may not be installed on Smithsonian computers and devices.

Software must be retired or replaced when the version is no longer supported by the vendor/developer or when security updates are no longer being provided for that version, because it may be vulnerable to attack. When acquiring software for Smithsonian use, personnel must plan and budget for its periodic replacement.

OCIO may remove software from any SI computer if it presents a risk to the Smithsonian. Personnel must obtain approval from OCIO or their unit IT manager before reinstalling any removed software. OCIO may also block any computer containing risky software from the SI network.

Personnel must ensure that all computers (including mobile devices, laptops, and Windows-based tablets) that they purchase have full disk encryption enabled. Personnel must also ensure
that the inventory management and theft deterrence software required by OCIO is installed on these devices.

All Smithsonian-owned computers, servers, and mobile devices must be configured in accordance with Smithsonian standards. Personnel must ensure that any new computers and devices that they acquire are configured to these standards or are submitted to IT support personnel for configuration of these standards.

All Smithsonian-owned devices are required to have up-to-date security patches. If a computer is found to be out of date on any security patches, it may be disabled until the patches have been installed. All employees are responsible for helping to ensure that their computer is kept up to date and secure by cooperating with, and following the instructions provided by, SI IT staff. Personnel must submit any new technologies, systems, cloud services, Web applications, websites, server applications, payment card processing solutions, or other IT services (or significant changes to existing ones) to the OCIO Technical Review Board for approval prior to acquisition or implementation. See SD 920, IT Life Cycle Management, for more information.

All purchases, especially those for IT systems and services, must contain appropriate security requirements such as SI-147B, Smithsonian Institution Privacy and Security Clause. Contact OCon&PPM if assistance is needed.

Rule 8: Protect Sensitive Data (including PII)

Users must take appropriate measures and exercise due diligence to protect sensitive data from loss, misuse, modification, and unauthorized access. Examples of sensitive data include Personally Identifiable Information (PII) (such as Social Security Numbers), payment card information (such as credit card numbers), proprietary information, and system security information (such as computer security deficiencies, User IDs [usernames], passwords, and network architecture information).

Everyone is responsible for protecting sensitive data and must apply appropriate safeguards. When handling sensitive data, users must:

- collect sensitive data only for a specific purpose and not retain it longer than required
- not transmit sensitive data over the intranet or internet unless encrypted. This includes all forms of transmission, including emails, file transfers, and Web forms. Users are responsible for obtaining the appropriate encryption tools and may contact OCIO for guidance in this area.
V. POLICY (continued)

- only store sensitive data on a cloud service if it is an OCIO-approved service and the storage of any PII has been authorized by the Privacy Office. Users must also carefully manage who they give access to their cloud storage and the share links that they create.

- not store sensitive data on non-SI-owned (e.g., personal) devices. This includes not synchronizing cloud storage files (such as those on Dropbox, OneDrive, and GoogleDrive) to personally owned computers and devices.

- only store sensitive data on a laptop, phone, tablet, removable drive, or other mobile device if the device or data is encrypted.

- not share sensitive data without approval of the appropriate management official.

- mark or label media containing sensitive data to control and limit its distribution.

- protect sensitive data that is in paper form by storing it in a secure location and shredding it when no longer needed.

- follow procedures in SD 315, Property Management Manual, for properly disposing of surplus computers, smartphones, and other hardware to ensure that data are securely wiped from these devices before disposal.

- conduct Smithsonian business via the official Smithsonian email system when using email.

Users must protect and handle PII in accordance with SD 118, Privacy Policy.

Users must protect any payment card data they handle in accordance with the requirements in SD 309, Merchant Accounts, Payment Cards, and the PCI Data Security Standard.

Rule 9: Apply Required Safeguards

To protect Smithsonian equipment and data, users are required to use safeguards that include:

- keeping laptops, tablets, cellular phones, and other mobile devices secure at all times, especially when traveling.

- storing data that the user considers important where it will be subject to the Institution’s automated backup process.
V. POLICY (continued)

- accounting for hardware loaned for at-home use in a unit’s personal property management records. Property custodians (PCs), or Accountable Property Officers (APOs) in the absence of a PC, are responsible for completing the required OCON 204, Personal Property Assignment/Personal Property Pass Form (available at the OCon&PPM Forms/Reference webpage), and obtaining the user’s signature on the form at the time the property is assigned. Users are responsible for returning the assigned property when it is no longer required or the user’s employment with the Smithsonian ends (see also SD 202, Exit Clearances). The PC, or APO, is responsible for taking necessary actions to ensure that the assigned property is returned when required and that the location of such property is accurately recorded in the unit’s personal property management records.

- using the Institution’s centralized program for the disposal/surplus of old computers (managed by OCon&PPM), including sanitization of media containing SI data (see Section 8.4.2 of SD 315, Property Management Manual regarding the disposal of personal property).

- exercising appropriate precautions to protect computing devices and data when traveling. See OCIO document “Computer Security While Traveling”

- exercising appropriate precautions when using videoconferencing technologies. See OCIO page on videoconferencing.

All Smithsonian computers must have antivirus software provided by the Institution installed and active. The entire Institution’s risk from the spread of malicious software is lowered when computers are properly configured to automatically update malware protection and to scan all files at the time they are received or used.

Any computers used to remotely access the Smithsonian network, including personally owned computers, must:

- have antivirus software installed. SI-provided antivirus licenses may be available for staff home use. See OCIO’s Prism site for details; and

- use vendor-supported versions of operating system and internet browsers and keep them up to date with software patches (updates) from their vendors.

Personnel should leave SI computers turned on but logged off when they leave each day so that they can receive important updates and security scans.
V. POLICY (continued)

Users may not tamper with, disable, or intentionally bypass any IT security protections implemented by the Smithsonian.

Occasionally, high-risk situations may require user cooperation and urgent action to secure SI systems. For example, a staff computer may require extra scanning, IT staff may need to remotely access a computer/device, a computer may need to be taken off the network to remove malware, or users may be requested to install an urgent software update or reboot their computers. Personnel are required to cooperate with and help IT staff as best they can. Personnel must also pay attention to SI-wide emails providing security alerts and perform the requested actions to secure their devices.

Rule 10: Protect Access Credentials

Personnel are responsible for all actions performed using their access credentials and must take care to protect those credentials.

Personnel are required to exercise due diligence in protecting their logon credentials by:

- having a network password with at least 12 characters. It must not be found in a dictionary and not easily guessed. The use of passphrases is recommended;

- not keeping any passwords in writing unless locked in a secure location;

- using approved password management tools to assist in remembering and tracking passwords if needed (see Rule 7 regarding approved software);

- changing passwords every 180 days or more frequently, as appropriate;

- not re-using passwords;

- never disclosing or sharing passwords;

- not using the same password they use for Smithsonian systems on other (non-Smithsonian) systems. This includes externally hosted systems used for Smithsonian work (such as the Concur travel system);

- immediately notifying their supervisor and the OCIO Service Desk if they suspect their password has been compromised;

- immediately changing their password if it may have been compromised;
V. POLICY (continued)

- not sharing any accounts without receiving an approved waiver from OCIO;
- locking their desktop or computing device when leaving the immediate area;
- not displaying any cellular telephone, mobile device, or carrier wireless card passwords in public or attaching passwords to any devices; and
- never emailing passwords.

The sharing of accounts to log onto the network or SI computers/systems is not allowed without an approved security waiver. See IT-930-TN01 for information on security waivers.

Personnel must successfully complete a Smithsonian background check prior to receiving a Smithsonian network/computer account. See SD 224, Identity Management Program, and IT-960-TN12, Active Directory Account and Password Requests, for further details.

Rule 11: Report Security Incidents

All personnel are required to:

- promptly report any suspected security incidents, including the loss or theft of computers and devices, to the OCIO Service Desk in accordance with IT-930-04, IT Security Incident Management, and SD 119, Privacy Breach Notification Policy; and
- fully cooperate with security incident investigation and response activities.

Examples of security incidents that must be reported include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Loss or theft of computers and devices (in accordance with the guidance provided in Chapter 7 of the SD 315 Personal Property Management Manual);
- Potentially compromised access credentials or unauthorized access;
- Suspicious emails, phone calls, alerts, pop-up messages, or other unusual computer behavior;
- Inappropriate content on an SI system or website;
- Sensitive data accidentally or intentionally distributed to unauthorized persons or transmitted/stored without encryption;
V. POLICY (continued)

- Slow or unstable computer operations, such as when the cursor moves on its own, or files have been moved or tampered with;

- Violations of any of the requirements in this directive.

**Rule 12: Use Cellular Phones and Mobile Devices Appropriately**

Users are required to comply with the following when using a Smithsonian-issued cellular telephone, mobile device, or carrier wireless card:

- Read and comply with IT-980-TN01, *Smithsonian Cellular Telephone, Mobile Device, or Carrier Wireless Card Policy*;

- Follow all local, state, and federal telecommunications laws when using these devices;

- Understand that users may be required to reimburse the Smithsonian for any unauthorized cellular telephone, mobile device, or carrier wireless card service charges and/or those deemed to be personal use that exceeds permitted usages;

- Contact the OCIO Service Desk or the unit administrative officer to have cellular telephone/mobile device/wireless service discontinued and billing stopped when no longer required. Users are responsible for all billing charges associated with the device until they have done so;

- Understand that cellular telephones, mobile devices, and carrier wireless cards are not approved for transmitting sensitive data (including PII) and that users must exercise discretion when using them;

- Configure and periodically change a PIN code on the cellular phone to protect it from unauthorized use; and

- Only use Smithsonian-issued wireless cards in Smithsonian-issued computers, not personally owned computers.

**B. Retention of User Agreements**

Approved units or affiliated organizations that provide user accounts on Smithsonian networks must either store their own signed user agreements or provide scans of signed user agreements to OCIO. Copies of these agreements must be made available to OCIO upon request.
V. POLICY (continued)

C. Access to Files and Email

As described in Rule 1 above, personnel should have no expectation of privacy when using Smithsonian IT resources. Electronic files, email, and other data may be accessed by:

- Staff seeking to ensure efficient and proper operation of the workplace, particularly during unplanned employee absences. OCIO must first approve access, with concurrence from the IT support staff in the museum, research center, or office;

- Staff searching for suspected misconduct or malfeasance. The Office of Human Resources (OHR), the General Counsel, or the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) must first approve access;

- Staff representing the Smithsonian in litigation or a legal dispute, including responding to a discovery request, law-enforcement investigation, court order, or otherwise complying with a legal obligation;

- Staff responding to a public records request pursuant to SD 807, Requests for Smithsonian Institution Information;

- IT system administrators and their supervisors in the legitimate performance of their normal duties. They may not reveal information obtained in this manner unless authorized by OHR, except they may report any suspected criminal or policy violations to the employee’s supervisor, senior management, the General Counsel or the OIG. Duties that allow a system administrator to access the files of other users include, but are not limited to:
  
  — maintenance or development
  — system security
  — correcting software problems
  — routine monitoring for compliance with this directive and for potential security incidents
  — security incident investigation and response; and

- Staff of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries and Archives (SLA) in the legitimate performance of their normal duties. Access must fall within its defined role as the Institutional Record Manager. The director in the museum, research center, or office must first approve access, with concurrence from the IT support staff for the museum, research center, or office. Duties that allow access include, but are not limited to:
V. POLICY (continued)

— identification of official and historical records
— development of unit-specific records management and retention guidance
— transfer of selected records to the Archives

D. Penalties

Penalties for violations of the user rules may include disciplinary action up to and including suspension without pay and termination of employment administered in accordance with Smithsonian personnel policies and procedures. Illegal activities will be reported to law-enforcement authorities for prosecution and punishment as provided by law.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Chief Information Officer:

- establishes computer security policies and standards; and
- grants waivers or exceptions to these policies and standards as appropriate.

B. The Smithsonian Director of IT Security:

- manages the computer security awareness program;
- administers the Institution’s computer security awareness training;
- periodically distributes security awareness information via email notices and other mechanisms;
- leads the Smithsonian’s security incident response activities; and
- monitors compliance with IT security policies.

C. The Director, Office of Human Resources (OHR), ensures that:

- computer security awareness training is included in the orientation of new employees;
VI. RESPONSIBILITIES (continued)

- employees receive a copy of this directive and user agreement during orientation; and

- the Human Resource Management System (HRMS) includes employee training completion to ensure employee compliance.

D. The director of each museum, research center, and office ensures that:

- each SI network account user completes the online Computer Security Awareness Training (CSAT) annually;

- each person without an SI network account completes the Information Security Awareness Training (ISAT) annually;

- new users sign user agreements;

- signed user agreements are provided to OCIO;

- the importance of security awareness and complying with security policies is promoted to the unit’s staff; and

- information about any suspected security incidents reported is passed on to the OCIO Security Operations Center (SOC).

E. Users ensure that they:

- read and understand the requirements in this directive before signing the user agreement;

- comply with the requirements in this directive; and

- report suspected violations of this directive to the OCIO Service Desk or their supervisor.

SUPERSEDES: SD 931, Use of Computers, Telecommunications Devices, and Networks, November 2, 2016.

INQUIRIES: Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO).

RETENTION: Indefinite. Subject to review for currency 36 months from date of issue.