

Marc,

I was shocked to read Lee Gore's letter approving George Carter's use of University inter-net and mail facilities for private business purposes. Now that we know that these two resources are available for operating a private business on campus, why don't we ask Mr. Gore for an opinion on a variety of other possible uses? Examples would include--(1) Is it permissible for faculty to use a university vehicle for private business drop-offs and deliveries? (2) Can faculty install business software on university computers so that they can generate bookkeeping, tax, etc. output for their businesses? (3) Would listing of a university telephone number for receiving business calls be permissible?

The foregoing are only a few examples of the slippery slope his ruling involves, and I am sure that you and others can greatly expand the list of requested clarifications of the use of university facilities engendered by his approval of the Carter situation.

Moreover, Mr. Gore's ruling is completely at odds with facilities usage rules at other universities. The following text contains excerpts from four institutions regarding their policies for using inter-net facilities for private purposes--I believe these examples are typical of standard university policies elsewhere. (The issue of receiving business mail on campus is just as egregious, if not more so, since university personnel are involved in the sorting and delivery of all such correspondence.)

(I have added the bold face in the items below.)

*Michigan Technological University*

Approval Date: August 8, 2001

Michigan Technological University Computer Use Policy

MTU considers access to computer resources to be a privilege granted on the condition that each member of the University Community uses these resources responsibly, and in accord with professional and university standards. This document describes MTU's computer resources, the responsibilities assumed by users of the system, the services provided to support and assist users and professional and university standards that must be observed.

Use of Computers and Networks

Computer and network facilities are provided for educational, research and administrative use. All access and use of University computing resources and services is presumed to be consistent with University rules and regulations, including University personnel policies, faculty and student codes of conduct and departmental policies and procedures. All use is also subject to the University's Conflict of Interest and Intellectual Property policy and procedure. **Use of Michigan Technological University's computers and networks for non-MTU-related business purposes or personal gain without authorization is prohibited.**

6. University resources are intended to be used for institutional purposes and may not be used for private gain.

The University provides information technology resources at great expense for the purpose of supporting its mission (learning, teaching, research, and public service). It is expected that usage will be primarily educational in nature in support of this mission.

All applicable laws and policies relating to the ethical use of public resources apply to University information technologies as well. **The Hawaii's State Ethics Code prohibits use of University resources for private business purposes (see [Appendix B](#)) and under no circumstances may individuals use institutional technology resources for commercial purposes without prior written authorization. This includes activities such as the use of University email or web sites for marketing a home business, hosting a commercial home page, or providing friends who are not members of the University community with access to institutional equipment and services. Users may not run private servers or bulletin board systems for non-University purposes through University networks or provide such connectivity to others. Political campaigning may not be engaged in using the University's electronic information systems**

*MIT*

- *Don't use Athena for private financial gain, as by sale of the use of Athena resources (especially to anyone outside MIT), or by use of the system in support of any profit-making scheme not explicitly intended to serve Institute purposes. (Cf. [MITnet Rule 1](#).)*

*University of Georgia*

(6) No one without specific [authorization](#) shall use any [University computer or network facility](#) for non-University business.

**Comments:** By law, the University can only provide computer services for its own work, not for private use. In this respect the University's computers are different from those owned by private colleges or corporations. If you need unlimited access to computer networks for private purposes, you can subscribe to a private service such as America Online or CompuServe.

The University's mission can be understood broadly as including education, self-training, and discussion on a wide range of subjects, not just those immediately necessary for a person's job or courses. In this context, University employees are accountable nonetheless for how they use time and equipment at work. Just like a telephone, an Internet connection at an employee's desk does not automatically confer permission to use it for personal purposes or entertainment.

The University grants the use of its facilities to numerous organizations whose activities contribute to its mission, such as student organizations, professional societies, and the Campaign for Charities. **But it is improper to use the University's computers for political campaigns, fund-raising, commercial enterprises, mass mailings, or other outside activities that have not been granted the use of the University's facilities.**

Various policies permit members of the University community to earn outside income by writing books and articles related to their academic work, and to use University resources for this purpose, including computers. Most faculty are also permitted to use University facilities for outside consulting jobs provided the University is reimbursed for costs incurred. Check with your supervisor to find out how these policies apply to you.