

Ethical Diagnostic Survey: The Public Computer Use Policy

at the University of Hawaii's Hamilton Library

Our group took a closer look at the Public Computer Use Policy (PCUP) in place at the University of Hawaii at Manoa's (UHM) Hamilton Library, in order to examine compliance with ALA and other ethical standards. According to UHM's (Fall 2014) *About UH Manoa*, the school serves a population of 19,507 students. The PCUP can be accessed through the main page of the library's website, in the section entitled, *About the Library*. Ehrhorn, (2001) is credited as the author of the PCUP, in which the library states computers should be used, "only to access information resources for educational, instructional and research needs." Priority Users are defined as UHM "faculty, students staff and other officially affiliated UH users." Non-affiliated users are limited to one hour a day, and can be asked to give up a computer to a Priority User.

The act of identifying some users with rights over others, brought up questions concerning equal access. The idea of a Priority User goes against the ALA's *Library Bill of Rights* (LBoR) (2006), which states, "a person's right to use a library may not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." However, looking further into the ALA's (2014) *Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries*, (which interprets the LBoR for academic libraries), users are referred to throughout, as the "academic community," so it is not in violation for an academic library to inhibit the use of resources to non-affiliated users; and additionally, is in alignment with principles found within the ALA's *Code of Ethics* (2008), which state, "We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources..." in the sense that resources are being organized and appropriated primarily to the academic community UHM serves. We distributed a survey (See Appendix A & B) and of the 38 responses received, 92.1% were UHM students, 5.3% were staff/faculty, and

2.6% were non-UH affiliated users. The majority of respondents (60.5%), felt it was fair to restrict use to “access information resources for educational, instructional and research needs.”

When logging-on to a CLIC lab computer, a popup notifies the user that by logging on, they have agreed to all UHM ITS Lab Rules and policies, the UHM Student Conduct Code, and the Management of Information Technology Resource Policy EP2.210 (See Appendix C). In our survey results, a 63.2% majority did not know there was a computer use policy, and 68.4% had never read it. A lack of knowledge about the use policy is problematic. While the PCUP clearly states, “this policy refers to computers in public (non-staff) areas,” all the computers in the CLIC lab, which comprise the vast majority of public use, direct users to different policies. Users are not referred back to the PCUP, and the PCUP does not refer directly to all policies cited on CLIC computers, though it does have a blanket statement that all users must “abide by all University and Library policy,” in addition to EP2.210.

When comparing the UHM PCUP to library policy at Cal Poly at Pomona (CPP), a university of comparable size, there is a huge difference. The section on *Public Workstations* in CPP’s policy deals primarily with Intellectual Freedom and privacy, with the opening line, “While the library will endeavor to protect the privacy of patron use of Library computers... the Library cannot and does not guarantee privacy.” The PCUP has no mention of privacy, and all privacy policies are found within EP2.210, which is an IT policy. In our survey we asked participants whether or not they felt their online activities were monitored -- 60.7% said yes, and 50% of of all users said they wouldn’t change how they used the computers, however, the other 50% of respondents had negative feelings and reactions to the question, with almost a quarter (23.7%) saying they would either change their habits or even stop using the computers if they knew their actions were being monitored, and 26.3% saying they would still use the computers in

the same way, but wouldn't like it; showing privacy is a big concern. Privacy issues within EP2.210, are extensively covered, but serves as an IT policy first, and is lengthy and could be cumbersome for users to understand. EP2.210 complies with The ALA's *Code of Ethics* (2008), *Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics*, by the Computer Ethics Institute (2011), and the Association for Computing Machinery's (1992) *ACM Code of Ethics*. EP2.210 acknowledges activity is logged, but has many rules governing system administrators, and proclaims that IT staff "shall not monitor or collect data regarding the activities of individuals unless specifically authorized to do in the context of a duly authorized investigation."

In regards to censorship and access issues, a blacklist is also mentioned in EP2.210, "...institutions are sometimes blacklisted from certain services which could prevent members of the University community from achieving their legitimate academic requirements" but it is precursored to indicate a site is blacklisted due to non-compliance with network security standards, and not intellectual content. Blacklisting was the only reference to filtering found in the policies, and I determined this does not go against ethical guidelines, since it serves to protect the network, and the security for the UHM user community.

### My Contribution

As a frequent user of the CLIC lab, I noticed there are multiple use policies you agree to when logging on to a CLIC lab computer, and brought this to the attention of my teammates. I examined all policies, especially ethical issues related to access and privacy since they were primarily embedded within IT policies (EP2.210). I understood all IT terminology, as a former system administrator and explained some technical jargon to group members, e.g. blacklist. I took photos, contributed to the survey and collection of data, and collaborated and communicated with members throughout. I found one ethical policy, a comparison computer-use

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LIS 610

ETHICAL DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY

4

policy, and helped with the slide presentation, google survey, survey distribution, and felt we all contributed in our own ways, and were a cohesive unit. I enjoyed being a member of this team, and strived to have a positive attitude and friendly spirit throughout.

### Conclusion

Overall the UHM PCUP (with EP2.210), upholds the ethical standards of the ALA, The Computer Ethics Institute, and The Association for Computing Machinery, in addition to the ALA LBoR. However, I feel the PCUP, being a library computer-use policy, should be updated to include a statement about privacy and Intellectual Freedom in layperson terms, while additionally referencing EP2.210 (as it currently does). For myself, the biggest issue was how segmented and inconsistent the policies were in the course of researching them for this report. I feel CLIC lab computers, should refer users back to the PCUP, and policies should be posted in the vicinity so users can read it before they log on. The PCUP was last updated in 2001, and I strongly feel it should be revised in the near future, and more unification across multiple policies between the Library and UH IT Services would make the PCUP a stronger policy.

References

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Appendix A: UH Manoa Computer Use Survey

UH Manoa Public Computer Use Survey

This survey is for a project for LIS 610, during the Fall 2015 Semester at UH Manoa. All responses are anonymous and no personal information is being collected by this form.

**1) What do you use the UH computers in the library for? Select all that apply:**

- School related: Email, research / papers / video or audio streaming
- Email (personal)
- Looking up materials in the library's OneSearch or Voyager Catalog
- Recreational Internet use
- Gaming
- Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
- Video or audio streaming (for entertainment)
- Other; please elaborate in the space provided:

**2) Did you know that the library has a Public Computer Use Policy?**

- Yes       No

**3) Have you read this library's Public Computer Use Policy?**

- Yes       No

**4 What do you think about this statement:**

According to the Public Computer Use Policy "UHM Library computers and related equipment are to be used only to access information resources for educational, instructional and research needs. The use of Library computer equipment for other purposes is prohibited."

*(Please write your answer on the back)*

**5) Do you feel that limiting the computers to "access information resources for educational, instructional and research needs" is fair?**

- Yes       No

**6) Do you feel that this is something that is actually enforced, or even possible to enforce?**

- Yes       No

**7) Have you encountered any issues while using the public computers such as problems with accessing certain sites or comments from the general staff at the library regarding your computer use? If so, please explain. A blank response assumes no issues were encountered:**

**8) Do you think your online activities are being monitored? (Choose one)**

- Yes       No

**9) If you knew your online activities were being monitored, would it influence your decision to use the computers, or change how you use these resources? (Choose one)**

- It wouldn't change anything
- I would stop using the public-use computers on campus
- I wouldn't like it, but would still use computers on campus in the same way I do now
- I would still use computers on campus, but would change my online activities

**10) I am a: (Choose one)**

- Student enrolled at UHM       Student enrolled at a different campus within the UH system
- Faculty member at UHM       Staff at UHM
- Community member (not a student or employee within the UH system)

Appendix B: Extracted Survey Results

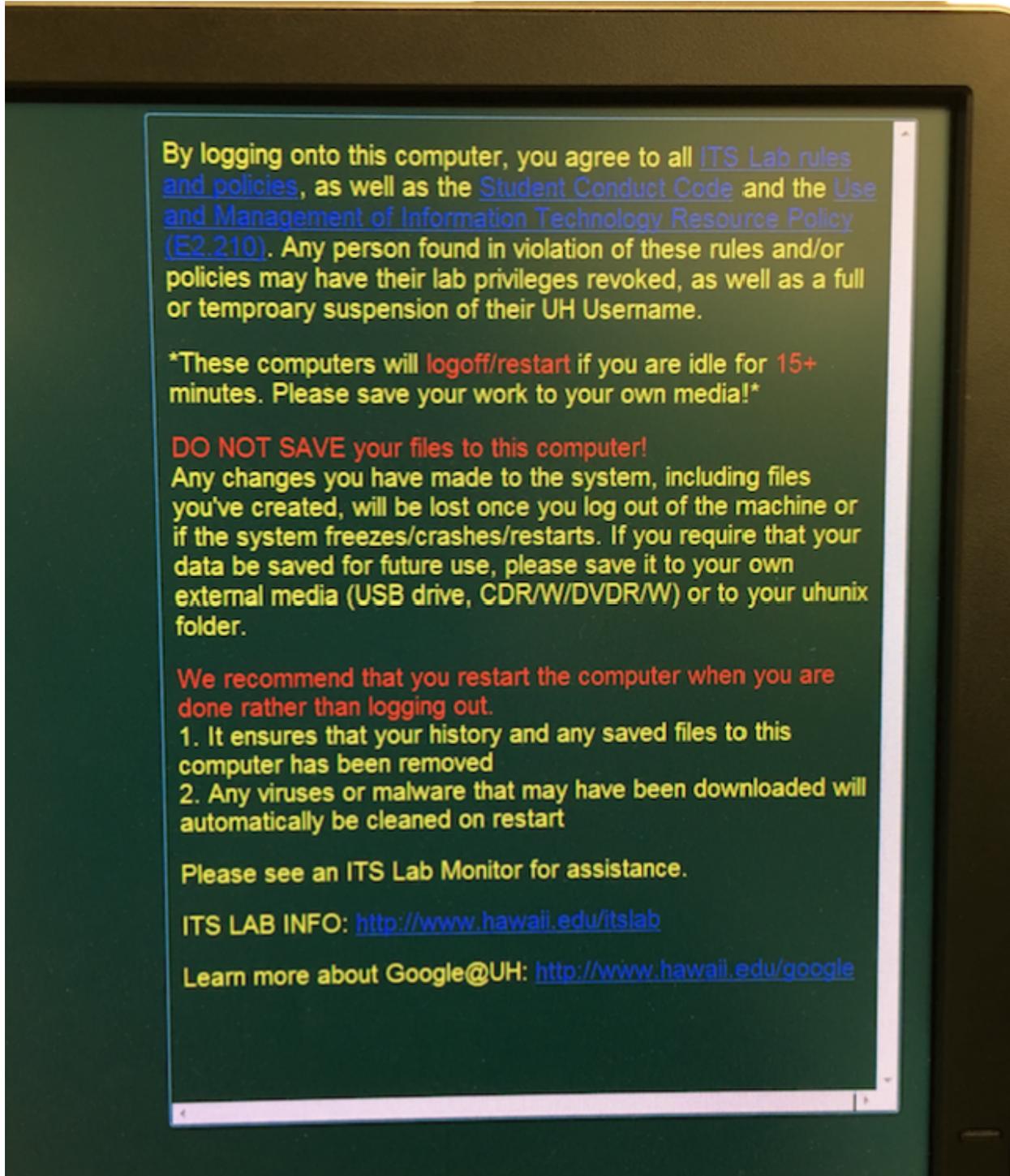
For a full version of the survey results, please go to:

<https://docs.google.com/a/hawaii.edu/spreadsheets/d/14CkLMqBSWJw2C9eIOQN4K5skCYBoPQs023ssQtY83dM/edit?usp=sharing>

**Table 1. Sampling of answers for Yes/No responses**

Questions	Responses
Did you know that the library has a Public Computer Use Policy?	No: 36.8% Yes: 63.2%
Have you read this library’s Public Computer Use Policy?	No: 68.4% Yes: 31.6%
Have you encountered any issues while using the public computers such as problems with accessing certain sites or comments from the general staff at the library regarding your computer use?	Yes: 5.3% No: 94.7%
Do you think your online activities are being monitored?	No: 39.3% Yes 60.7%
If you knew your online activities were being monitored, would it influence your decision to use the computers, or change how you use these resources?	I would still use computers on campus but would change online activities: 10.5% I would stop using public-use computers: 13.2% I wouldn’t like it, but would still use computers on campus in the same way I do now: 26.3% It wouldn’t change anything: 50.0%
I am a	Student: 92.1% UHM Faculty/Staff: 5.3% Non-affiliated user: 2.6%
Do you feel that limiting the computers to “access information resources for educational, instructional and research needs” is fair?	Yes: 60.5% No: 39.5%

Appendix C: Notification of policies users agree to upon login



A photo of what a user agrees to upon login at the CLIC lab