Privacy

no policy addresses surveillance of e-mails or personal files.

OUS Director of Legal Services Ben Rawlins said students aren't protected from file searches. "The premise is that it is the University's equipment you are using," he said. "So the University is extending the privilege to use it, but it is the University's property."

Rawlins also said there is no threat of the University policing users' files. "They have a right, but they would not choose to do it," he said. "It gets into a terribly expensive proposition, and it is inconsistent with the ethics of academia."

During fall term, the University searched files of high-bandwidth users, found more than 250 students in the residence halls illegally downloading copyrighted material and pulled the plug on them, said Norman Myers, residence hall computing services coordinator.

After meeting with the Office of Student Conduct, students can have their computer ports turned on again.

Since Jan. 1, Myers said, the University has turned off the ports to more than 25 residence hall users

for copyright violation. Nothing protects students from having their files examined on the probable cause of heavy bandwidth use.
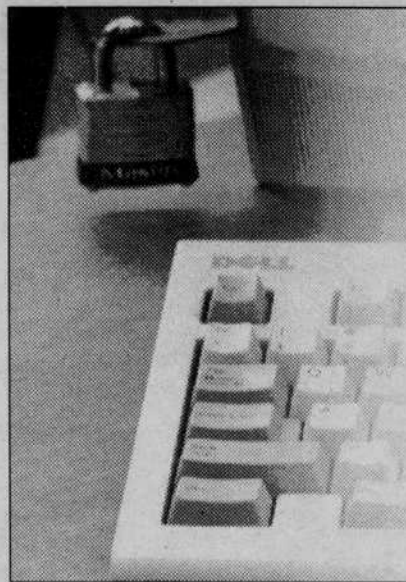
OPEU Local 085 Chief Steward Ellen Klaastad said that the union representing University workers is aware of the situation.

"We tell our members to use a free e-mail service," she said. "Free services, such as Hotmail or Yahoo!, don't store e-mails on the University server, so they can't be watched in the same manner."

For its part, the Oregon University System, which oversees the administration and operation of Oregon's seven public universities, leaves the establishment of such policies to individual campuses, according to OUS spokesman Bob Bruce.

University of California campuses, on the other hand, operate under a systemwide "Electronic Communications Policy," which states, in part, that campus network users' files may not be examined without their consent, except in "emergency circumstances," such as a known violation of law or immediate threat to person or property.

UC spokeswoman Mary Spletter said a general policy was developed over the last few years, and individ-

ual campuses are free to establish more specific policies. Spletter said the Electronic Communications Policy was designed to encourage innovation as well as offer protection.

"We look at our role as helping develop the new technologies," she said, "rather than setting ourselves up as police guards."

An Internet search of the nine California campuses' press releases, newsletters and student newspapers found no instances of a UC school searching through files on a user's computer to determine copyright violations. At UC Santa Barbara and UC Berkeley, students have been caught illegally sharing music by the Record Industry Association, but not by network administrators for the schools.

In an e-mail interview, UC Berkeley's network services director Cliff Frost said the university doesn't see heavy bandwidth use as a rationale to search users' files. Frost said he is unaware of the university ever looking at a user's files.

UC system officials might not see themselves as "police guards," but privacy protection is explicit in the Electronic Communications Policy, which says, in part:

"The university does not routinely inspect, monitor or disclose electronic communications without the holder's consent. ... Such actions must be authorized in advance and in writing by the responsible campus vice chancellor."

George Gregg, assistant housing director at UC Santa Barbara, told the school's student paper, The Daily Nexus, that the campus doesn't monitor the university network for copyright violations "as a matter of principle. We aren't Big Brother."

But until the University of Oregon adopts a draft policy — and it includes protection from file searches — students should expect that heavy bandwidth use could set off alarms.

E-mail copy chief Michael J. Kleckner at mikekleckner@dailyemerald.com.

No policy exists protecting users of University servers from file searches

In late October, computing officials tracked the highest users of bandwidth

Officials searched the files of the highest-bandwidth users for copyrighted files

During fall term, more than 250 students had their ports turned off for copyright violations

University officials are developing a privacy policy, which could include protection from searches

Since Jan. 1, more than 25 additional students have had their ports turned off for copyright violations

Photo illustration by Thomas Patterson Emerald

Violations

regulating it so that we can have a faster connection that isn't slowed down by all the downloading."

The University's "Acceptable Use Policy" states, "Illegally copied software subjects the University to risk of litigation, and denies software authors the compensation they deserve."

Simply put: The University will take the blame.

The stakes are being raised for students continuing to violate the policy. A Jan. 9 e-mail from Information Services told students that they would be bumped to a slower connection if were using caught using file-sharing programs.

This would also allow all other information to travel on the faster connection.

University Housing is offering tips on how to disable file-sharing programs and giving students forms for getting their Internet reconnected, should they be kicked off the server.

"If you must share, pull any copyrighted material out," advised Hous-

ing's ResNet Connections Technician Doug Mason. "If it's not yours and not public domain, don't share it!"

Resident Assistant Kristen Miller had her port shut off for violating the copyright restriction in the University housing contract. She knew about the contract's rules and received a warning to disable her file-sharing program — but the warning came only after her service had been turned off. Miller suggested the warning be sent at the beginning of the school year when people are getting their Internet connection.

She also advised residents to not let anyone download from them, and distributed fliers on what can be done to comply with policy.

"I'm doing whatever I can to get the word out to people in my hall to be careful using the Internet, and to avoid sharing files whenever possible," Miller said. She added that she hopes others in her hall will follow this example and cut down on the downloading.

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