

Principles of Responsible Use of Project Athena

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Abstract

Project Athena is a five-year experiment in the use of a large, networked computer system as part of the educational process at M.I.T. Athena's distributed computer system will open up entirely new ways for members of the M.I.T. community to share information. One consequence of linking the entire community together, however, is the potential for improper use of the system, a violation of M.I.T.'s high standards of honesty and personal conduct.

Intended Use

The hardware granted to Project Athena, and the software licensed for that hardware, are intended only for educational use by M.I.T. community members. Use of Athena resources by anyone outside M.I.T. requires approval of the Provost, and the sale of such use is prohibited. The use of Athena resources for financial gain is similarly prohibited. Use of Project Athena's facilities for sponsored research activities that normally would make use of other M.I.T. facilities is not permitted, except by permission of the Director.

Privacy and Security

The UNIX ([athena.html#UNIX](#)) operating system used by Project Athena facilitates sharing information and software among its users. Security mechanisms for protecting information from unintended access--from within the system or from the outside--are minimal. These mechanisms, by themselves, are inadequate for a community the size of

M.I.T.'s, for whom protection of individual privacy is as important as sharing. Users must supplement the system's security mechanisms by using the system in a manner that preserves the privacy of others.

For example, users should not attempt to gain access to the files or directories of another user without explicit authorization from that user (unless that user has intentionally made them available for public access). Nor should users attempt to intercept any systems communications, such as electronic mail or terminal dialog. Programs should not store information about other users without the users' prior knowledge. Personal information about another individual, which a user would not otherwise disseminate to the M.I.T. community, should not be stored or communicated on the system without the other individual's permission. Such information includes grades, evaluation of students, and their work.

System Integrity

Actions taken by users intentionally to interfere with or to alter the integrity of the system cannot be permitted. These include unauthorized use of accounts, impersonation of other individuals in systems communications, attempts to crack passwords or encryption, and destruction or alteration of data or programs belonging to other users. Equally unacceptable are intentional efforts to restrict or deny access by others to any of the resources of the system.

Intellectual Property Rights

Some software and databases that reside on the system are owned by users or third parties, and are protected by copyright and other laws, together with licenses and other contractual agreements. Users must abide by these restrictions. Such restrictions may include prohibitions against copying programs or data for use on non-Athena systems or for distribution outside M.I.T., against the resale of data or programs or their use for noneducational purposes or for financial gain, and against public disclosure of information about programs (e.g., source code) without the owner's authorization. It is the responsibility of the owner of protected software or data to make any such restrictions known to the user.

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