

Texas A&M University System Standard – Use of Peer-to-Peer File Sharing Software

Standard Statement

This standard describes requirements related to the appropriate use of peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing software. Being an institution of higher education, use of any software is allowed as long as the software is appropriately licensed, and its use does not violate any Federal or State laws, System policies or regulations, or System Office rules, standards or procedures. Generally, P2P software should be used only for legitimate System Office business. However, as with other software, brief and occasional personal use of P2P software is allowable if such use is in accordance with the standard for *Acceptable Use*. Use of P2P file-sharing software may require special attention by individual users in order to prevent the unintended or inappropriate distribution of files.

Definitions

Peer-to-Peer (P2P) File Sharing Software - Computer software, other than computer and network operating systems, that has as its primary function the capability of allowing the computer on which the software is used to designate files available for transmission to another computer using the software, to transmit files directly to another computer using the software, and to request transmission of files from another computer using the software.

University Network User - Anyone owning and/or responsible for the operation of a computer attached to the Texas A&M University network.

Official Standard

1. APPLICABILITY

This Standard Administrative Procedure (standard) applies to all individually or System Office owned computing systems attached to the Texas A&M University network. The intended audience includes all System Office network users.

The information resource owner or designee (e.g., custodian or owner), is responsible for ensuring that the risk mitigation measures described in this standard are implemented. Based on risk management consideration and business functions, the resource owner may determine that it would be appropriate to exclude certain risk mitigation measures provided in this standard. All exclusions must be in accordance with standard *Exclusions from Required Risk Mitigation Measures*.

2. STANDARDS

- 2.1 Any System Office network user who utilizes P2P file sharing software should be thoroughly familiar with the proper use, options, and default settings of the particular P2P program. The user must ensure that the P2P program configuration does not allow automatic/unintended file sharing.
- 2.2 Insecurely configured file sharing programs may be cause for removal of network access from the hosting computer. This includes, but is not limited to, Windows file sharing without password protection and other systems with unauthenticated and/or unrestricted uploading and/or downloading capabilities.
- 2.3 For instances in which the department is the owner-custodian or custodian of a system using P2P software, the department is responsible for ensuring compliance with this procedure. Each department will be asked to identify uses of P2P file sharing software and report/document the installations/uses as part of the annual risk assessment process.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[Regulation 29.01.03](#)

Standard Acceptable Use

Contact Office

For interpretation and clarification contact The Texas A&M University System Chief Information Officer

OFFICE OF RESPONSIBILITY: The Texas A&M University System Chief Information Officer