

## **8. Usage policies**

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In order to maintain control, organizations should get their users to sign a usage policy agreement before they can use the Internet. This policy should describe appropriate use: for example, a user would agree not to use the university's computers for illegal activities or mass e-mailing.

Examples of usage policies appear in Appendix C.

Internet usage policies are essential for any large organization, and require not only a good policy document but also attention from a high-level ICT directorate, because policy implementation cannot be dependent upon the personality of the network administrator but must involve higher-level management.

If a policy is not enforced, it is not worth having. Successful implementation and enforcement of usage policies requires a network to which users have to log on. Authentication is discussed in the next section.

Management needs to think about how to deal with abuse. It is wise to make users aware that their usage is monitored, but also that their privacy not invaded. Where management becomes aware of abuse, a general warning is suggested, rather than an example being made of the first offender; only when warnings are not heeded should action be taken. Over-zealous enforcement has its own dangers: for example, users might begin to think they live in a police state and switch to Web-based e-mail because they think that their e-mail messages are being read; or users who can, may make dial-up connections to the Internet in order to bypass monitoring, but dial-up is expensive, and also thwarts security and anti-virus measures. Pragmatism is the best approach. For example, lists of the top sites that have been visited can be posted on notice boards to indicate that the organization is aware of the activities that users are undertaking.