

**Title/Topic: Security of Data**  
**Number: PS06.20**  
**Functional Classification: Information Technology**  
**Initially Issued: 10/03/2006**  
**Last Revised: 5/20/2009**

## SECURITY OF DATA

### **PURPOSE**

This Policy Statement outlines the responsibilities of all *users* in supporting and upholding the security of *data* at Louisiana State University (“LSU” or the “University”) regardless of *user’s* affiliation or relation with the University, and irrespective of where the *data* is located, utilized, or accessed. All members of the University community have a responsibility to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of *data* from unauthorized generation, access, modification, disclosure, transmission, or destruction. Specifically, this Policy Statement establishes important guidelines and restrictions regarding any and all use of *data* at, for, or through Louisiana State University. This policy is not exhaustive of all *user* responsibilities, but is intended to outline certain specific responsibilities that each *user* acknowledges, accepts, and agrees to follow when using *data* provided at, for, by and/or through the University. Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, expulsion, and/or legal action.

### **DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of this Policy Statement, the following definitions shall apply:

**“Computing resources”** shall be defined as all devices (including, but not limited to, personal computers, laptops, PDAs and smart phones) owned by the University, the user or otherwise, which are part of or are used to access (1) the LSU network, peripherals, and related equipment and software; (2) *data* communications infrastructure, peripherals, and related equipment and software; (3) voice communications infrastructure, peripherals, and related equipment and software; (4) and all other associated tools, instruments, facilities, and the services that make use of any technology resources owned, operated, or controlled by the University. *Computing resources* or components thereof may be individually assigned or shared, single-user or multi-user, stand-alone or networked, and/or mobile or stationary.

**“Data”** shall include all information that is used by or belongs to the University, or that is processed, stored, maintained, transmitted, copied on, or copied from University *computing resources*.

**“Data Steward(s)”** shall be defined as the *functional unit(s)* that is responsible for the collection, maintenance, and integrity of the *data*.

**“Functional unit(s)”** shall include any campus, college, program, service, department, office, operating division, vendor, facility *user*, or other person, entity or defined unit of Louisiana State University that has been authorized to access or use *computing resources* or *data*.

**“Least privilege”** shall be defined as the principle that requires each person and/or functional unit be granted the most restrictive set of privileges needed for the performance of authorized tasks.

**“Protected information”** shall be defined as *data* that has been designated as private or confidential by law or by the University. *Protected information* includes, but is not limited to, employment records, medical records, student records, education records, personal financial

records (or other personally identifiable information), research *data*, trade secrets, and classified government information. *Protected information* shall not include public records that by law must be made available to the general public. To the extent there is any uncertainty as to whether any *data* constitutes *protected information*, the *data* in question shall be treated as *protected information* until a determination is made by the University or proper legal authority.

“**User(s)**” shall be defined as any person or entity that utilizes *computing resources*, including, but not limited to, employees (faculty, staff, and student workers), students, agents, vendors, consultants, contractors, or sub-contractors of the University.

## **GENERAL POLICY**

Louisiana State University *functional units* operating or utilizing *computing resources* are responsible for managing and maintaining the security of the *data*, *computing resources* and *protected information*. *Functional units* are responsible for implementing appropriate managerial, operations, physical, and technical controls for access to, use of, transmission of, and disposal of *data* in compliance with this policy. This requirement is especially important for those *computing resources* that support or host critical business functions or *protected information*.

*Protected information* will not be disclosed except as provided by University policy and procedures, or as required by operation of law or court order.

Any electronic *data* of the University shall be classified as public, private, or confidential according to the following categories:

- **Public *data*** - Public *data* is defined as *data* that any person or entity either internal or external to the University can access. The disclosure, use, or destruction of public *data* should have no adverse affects on the University nor carry any liability (examples of public *data* include readily available news and information posted on the University's website).
- **Private *data*** - Private *data* is any *data* that derives its value from not being publicly disclosed. It includes information that the University is under legal or contractual obligation to protect. The value of private *data* to the University and/or the custodian of such *data* would be destroyed or diminished if such *data* were improperly disclosed to others. Private *data* may be copied and distributed within the University only to authorized users. Private *data* disclosed to authorized, external users must be done in accord with a Non-Disclosure Agreement (examples of private *data* include employment *data*).
- **Confidential *data*** - Confidential *data* is *data* that by law is not to be publicly disclosed. This designation is used for highly sensitive information whose access is restricted to authorized employees. The recipients of confidential *data* have an obligation not to reveal the contents to any individual unless that person has a valid need and authorized permission from the appropriate authority to access the *data*, and the person revealing such confidential *data* must have specific authority to do so. Confidential *data* must not be copied without authorization from the identified custodian (examples of confidential *data* include personally identifiable information in student education records, and personally identifiable non-public information about University employees).

Please see [Classification of Data](#) for a general guide to determine which data classification is appropriate for a particular information or infrastructure system.

Although some protected information, private data, and confidential data the University maintains may ultimately be determined to be “public records” subject to public disclosure, such status as public records shall not determine how the University classifies and protects data until such a determination is made. Often public records are intermingled with confidential data and protected

information, so all the information and data should be protected as confidential until it is necessary to segregate any public records.

It shall be the responsibility of the *data steward(s)* to classify the *data*, with input from appropriate university administrative units and legal counsel. However, all individuals accessing *data* are responsible for the protection of the *data* at the level determined by the *data steward(s)*, or as mandated by law. Therefore, the *data steward(s)* are responsible for communicating the level of classification to individuals granted access. Any *data* not yet classified by the *data steward(s)* shall be deemed confidential. Access to *data* items may be further restricted by law, beyond the classification systems of Louisiana State University.

All *data* access must be authorized under the *principle of least privilege*, and based on minimal need. The application of this principle limits the damage that can result from accident, error, or unauthorized use. All permissions to access confidential *data* must be approved by an authorized individual, and written or electronic record of all permissions must be maintained.

*Protected information* shall not be provided to external parties or *users* without approval from the *data steward*. In cases where the *data steward* is not available, approval may be obtained by the Director or Department Head of the office in which the *data* is maintained, or by an official request from a senior executive officer of the University (i.e., President, Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost, or Vice Chancellor).

When an individual that has been granted access changes responsibilities or leaves employment, all of their access rights should be reevaluated and any access to *protected data* outside of the scope of their new position or status should be revoked.

*Data* that is critical to the mission of the University shall be located, or backed up, on centralized servers maintained by the institution, unless otherwise authorized by the *data steward* of that *data*, or Office of the Vice Chancellor for Information Technology (OVCIT).

In the interest of securing information protected under FERPA, GLBA, HIPAA, other state and federal legislation, University policies (e.g. PS-113: Social Security Number Policy), and reducing the risks to the University of fines and other penalties, all users of *computing resources* shall follow [Best Practices for Confidential, Private, or Sensitive Data](#) and [Best Practices for Securing Systems](#).

**NOTE:** Please see [Data Encryption](#) for options to secure data.

## PROCEDURES

Complaints or concerns about violations of this or other technology policies should be sent to [security@lsu.edu](mailto:security@lsu.edu). After verification is complete using system or other logs, and in accordance with other applicable policies and procedures, the incident will be reported to the appropriate Dean, Director, or Department Head for review and possible action.

## **SOURCE**

PS-1 Equal Opportunity  
PS-06.15 Use of Electronic Mail (E-mail)  
PS-06.25 Privacy of Computing Resources  
PS-10 Internal and External Communications/Advertisements  
PS-30 Privacy Rights of Students (Buckley Amendment)  
PS-40 Employee Records Confidentiality  
PS-107 Computer Users' Responsibilities  
PS-113 Social Security Number Policy  
PS-114 Security of Computing Resources  
LSU Code of Student Conduct  
PM-36 Louisiana State University System Information Security Plan  
The Louisiana Database Security Breach Notification Law (Act 499)

## **MONITORING UNIT**

*Office of the Vice Chancellor for Information Technology (OVCIT)*  
*Information Security & Policy Officer*  
*Information Technology Services (ITS)*  
[ITS-Policy@lsu.edu](mailto:ITS-Policy@lsu.edu)