



**University of Washington
FACULTY SENATE
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Class C Bulletin No. 477

**Resolution Concerning Live Webcams
on University of Washington Websites**

WHEREAS, the University of Washington encourages the use of educational technology to benefit teaching and learning; and

WHEREAS, educational technology includes Websites published on the Internet showing output from digital cameras in regular intervals or on request ("Webcams"); and

WHEREAS, Webcams can help students to see research environments, experimental settings, equipment, buildings, specialists at work, or lectures in real time; and

WHEREAS, Webcams can sometimes enhance the learning experience; and

WHEREAS, published recommendations may assist in helping to prevent inappropriate use of Webcams (such as broadcasting images of people without their consent, unwelcome interactions directed at people seen on Webcams, or restricted equipment and locations being seen publicly and worldwide); and

WHEREAS, the individuals running UW Webcams could become subjects of retaliation or complaints; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the following practices should be readily available to UW faculty, staff, and students:

1. The content seen through a Webcam should be beneficial to the mission of the University of Washington to serve education and research.
2. The content seen on a Webcam must not include images of any restricted technology.
3. Preferably the content seen or heard on a Webcam should not permit the individual identification of persons.
4. If a Webcam is capable of identifying individual persons,
 - a. an easily viewed sign placed on or near the Webcam's camera should notify anyone whose voice or image might be captured on the Webcam of the existence of the camera and the fact that individually identifiable images (and, if applicable, sound) will be broadcast over the Internet;
 - b. individuals should be asked for their consent to be seen or heard (if no consent is given, the location of the camera should be revised accordingly); and
 - c. if possible, such consent should be obtained in writing.
5. Consideration should be given to not identifying the location of the Webcam's camera on the associated website so as to reduce the chances of unwelcome visitors.
6. Use of surveillance cameras should be checked with the UW police.
7. Help in establishing a Webcam can be obtained from unit Webmasters or at help@cac.washington.edu.
8. A link to the Webmaster responsible for the Webcam should be included on the UW Webcam's Website.

*Submitted by:
Faculty Council on Educational Technology
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January 12, 2009*

*Approved by:
Senate Executive Committee
January 12, 2009*

*Approved by:
Faculty Senate
January 29, 2009*

Rationale for Class C Resolution Concerning Live Webcams on UW Websites

Introduction

With the increased use of electronic cameras and frequent podcasting, the question arises if these practices need to be guided for the sake of protection of both the people seen in such activities and those who undertake them. It is undeniable that podcasting or live broadcasting of some activities is highly educational and has potential to support the mission of the university.

Privacy of individuals is governed by federal and state law. Although there are differences between the states, common practices can be established that address the most common privacy issues.

- a) Video or audio broadcasts and recordings of persons in a public space or other situations where a person normally has his "guard up" (that is, expects to be seen) usually have fewer legal restrictions.
- b) Capture and transmission of images or audible sounds in a situation where a person has his "guard down" (such as in a private office) usually raise a host of legal issues.
- c) In addition to generally applicable legal restrictions, the UW is subject to a number of specific privacy laws, such the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA," which protects patient information) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA," which protects education records).
- d) Audio as well as images must be considered.
- e) Most privacy concerns can be resolved by ensuring that no person in a video or sound broadcast or recording is individually identifiable.

With these facts in mind, the resolution above should help to guide those members of the University of Washington who intend to connect cameras to the Internet in support of UW education, research, and outreach.

Werrner Kaminsky, representing the Faculty Council on Educational Technology
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