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I want to highlight an issue that has effectively ended the otherwise promising careers of several individuals in our command. The issue is misuse of a government computer.

My message in this regard is simple and clear — don't do it!

With the rapid growth in the World Wide Web, the Internet and electronic mail, the temptation and the opportunity to misuse a government computer have grown exponentially.

From our desk-top computers, we now have almost unlimited access to Web sites around the globe. This new technology has brought many great benefits for the Air Force; at the same time, abuse of this technology — and the Air Force's ability to detect abuse — have also grown.

The rules regarding computer use are set forth in AFI 33-119, Electronic Mail (e-mail) Management and Use; and AFI 33-129,

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Don't risk your career through computer misuse

Transmission of Information Via the Internet. These rules are also contained in the DoD Joint Ethics Regulation.

Here are some highlights that you can cut out and place by your computer as a reminder.

Top 10 "Do Nots" on a Government Computer

Do Not:

1. Retrieve, view, download or send sexually explicit, obscene or offensive material
2. Visit Internet chat rooms or open discussion forums (unless officially sanctioned)
3. Use your computer for personal financial gain (e.g., e-bay sales, stock trades)
4. Send/receive personal e-mail (except as authorized by your supervisor IAW AFI 33-119, paragraph 3.3.2)
5. Send harassing, intimidating, abusive or offensive material to or about others
6. Install unofficial software or software in violation of the vendor's

license

7. Use another person's account or identity without authorization

8. Permit any unauthorized individual access

9. Store or process classified material on an unclassified system

10. View, change, damage, delete, or block another's access to files/communications

If you are caught misusing your government computer, disciplinary action can be taken against you.

For military personnel, this typically means an Article 15 or letter of reprimand, depending on the nature and severity of the misuse.

Beyond the immediate punishment, disciplinary action can also have lasting career consequences. It can effectively limit your ability to compete for promotion or a command assignment.

It may also trigger removal from a promotion and/or professional military education list, or even result in administrative separation. For civilians, the consequences can be equally significant under the civilian disciplinary system.

If you need to use a computer for personal business and you don't have one at home, please consider that most local and on-base libraries now have free computer and Internet access available for cardholders to use. There are also commercial vendors who provide computers and Internet access for an hourly fee.

My message in pointing these things out to you is not to lecture, but simply to ask you to think twice every time you use your government computer.

Monitoring systems are in place that can, and do, track what you send, as well as which Internet sites you visit.

Please don't take a chance on potentially ruining the career you have spent a lifetime building. It's simply not a risk worth taking.

