

Code of Conduct for Individual Members of the Internet Society

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The original text is in English and is definitive in case of dispute about translations.

Purpose

The Internet Society's motto, for many years, has been "The Internet is for Everyone." As the Internet continues to penetrate into every corner of human society and of the economy, members of the Internet Society (ISOC) have a responsibility to demonstrate the standards of behaviour that are appropriate to continued growth and beneficial use of the Internet. People designing, building and operating Internet services, or simply using the Internet as a major tool in everyday life and work, need to adopt standards of behaviour like those of any profession. We build bridges and buildings to stand for at least 100 years, resisting natural and man-made disasters as far as possible, and to be useful for applications beyond their original design. Despite its rate of change, the Internet should be the same. Also, it should be deployed for the benefit of individuals and society, and Internet professionals have a consequent personal responsibility. Similarly, people simply using Internet services have a corresponding responsibility to avoid misuse.

The purpose of this code of conduct is to indicate the standard of professional behaviour to which ISOC members aspire, and which is intended to be an example to Internet professionals as a whole. It can be used by members to measure their own behaviour, and as a reference when considering the behaviour of others. The items in the code are intended to be as close as possible to observable or measureable behaviours, rather than requiring subjective or ethical judgement.

The code serves to define a form of professional identity. Although many aspects also apply to every user of the Internet, it is intended to give ISOC members a sense that they belong to a community with shared values and shared responsibilities.

The Code of Conduct

— When designing, implementing, operating and using Internet technology and services,
— when formulating or influencing relevant policies, laws, and regulations,
— and in all professional and personal dealings

an ISOC member will

1. Take all reasonable care to ensure that his or her work and the products of his or her work cause no avoidable danger or physical harm to any person.
2. Take all reasonable steps to minimise waste of natural resources, damage to the environment, and damage to products of human skill and industry.

3. If his or her professional advice is not accepted, take all reasonable steps to ensure that all persons neglecting or over-ruling this advice are aware of the possible danger or damage which may result.
4. Avoid deploying technologies that defeat generally accepted technical principles of the Internet, as documented primarily by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). In particular, avoid technologies that tend to subdivide access to the Internet rather than preserving its universal, unique, and international nature, except as required by security mechanisms mentioned in the next paragraph.
5. Pay particular attention to the protection of Internet services against disaster and against a physical or electronic attack, and to the protection of the integrity and privacy of stored or transmitted information.
6. Take all reasonable steps, including education and the wide spreading of knowledge, to ensure the Internet can be available, accessible, and useful to everyone.
7. Only offer or claim to offer opinions or services that lie within the member's actual knowledge or competence.
8. In the case of financial or material conflict between personal and professional interests, or between two professional interests, declare this conflict to all interested parties and if appropriate in public.
9. Respect the generally accepted norms of Internet etiquette for human communications, especially by avoiding communications that are false or are likely to be considered as discourteous, objectionable, malicious, unwanted, or causing unjustified loss of prestige. Avoid fraudulent or deceptive statements.
10. Respect the rights of all Internet users to privacy of, and freedom of access to, information and communication; promote these rights within the limits of his or her power.
11. Treat all users and colleagues fairly and on equal terms.
12. Respect legitimate intellectual property rights, do not plagiarize the work of others, and give credit to the originators of ideas.
13. Encourage others to follow this code of conduct, and discourage breaches of this code. Offer and accept honest and constructive criticisms of opinions and work as they relate to this code.
14. Not associate with, and not allow ISOC's name to be associated with, persons or organizations consistently in breach of this code.

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