Social Networking Best Practice Guidelines

APPLICABLE POLICIES AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT:

NAIT believes that virtual worlds and other Internet social networking environments offer significant opportunity to our instructors, our students and the institution at large, as they evolve, grow in use and popularity, and become more integrated into many aspects of educational and social events.

As an innovation-based institution, NAIT encourages instructors and students to explore responsibly and to further the development of such new spaces of relationship-building, learning and collaboration.

As we engage in these new environments, NAIT students and staff should follow and be guided first and foremost by our Statement of Values and our Student Code of Conduct (section 4.3).

These *Social Networking Best Practice Guidelines* have been created to build upon those foundations and to address some of the choices that individual NAIT students and staff may face in virtual worlds and social networking environments. These guidelines are not intended to address every situation you may encounter through use of a digital persona or personas, but they provide a basic framework which informs our collective engagement and exploration.

Your conduct in a NAIT affiliated virtual world and other Internet social networking environments is subject not only to NAIT's Statement of Values and the standards, policies, procedures and penalties set forth in the Student Code of Conduct (section 4.3), but also to the guides, codes of conduct, standards and/or policies relevant to that environment. In addition, the following best practices apply:

Good judgment.
NAIT encourages its instructors and students to explore responsibly – indeed, to further the development of – new spaces of relationship-building, learning and collaboration. As in physical communities however, good and bad will be found in social networking communities. You will need to exercise good judgment as to how to react in a variety of situations – including whether to opt out or proceed.

Protect your – and NAIT's – good name.
At this point in time, assume that activities and participation in virtual worlds and social networking environments are public. Be mindful that your actions may be visible for a long time.
- Be careful how much information you divulge about yourself or others. Posting personal information of your own or others could potentially lead to unwanted attention and could contribute to identity fraud.
- You should not post details which you or others might find embarrassing if seen by family members or a future employer.
- If you contribute comments about an identifiable individual, you should bear in mind that anyone anywhere will be able to see what you have posted, including the individual the comments are directed toward.

- Do not make offensive or derogatory remarks about others, including fellow students, or members of staff, and do not post obscene or derogatory images. Before participating in any online community, understand that anything posted online is available to anyone in the world. *Any text or photo placed online is completely out of your control the moment it is placed online – even if you limit access to your site.*
- Be cognizant of the fact that many employers and post-secondary schools monitor these sites.
- Be aware that wrongful conduct in a virtual environment, may result in the same legal consequences as wrongful conduct in the real world, including potential legal liability to parties who are claiming to have been harmed by such wrongful conduct – examples of potential legal causes of action that could flow from failure to follow the standards of conduct discussed herein are harassment, defamation, breach of privacy, fraud, misappropriation of intellectual property, negligence causing injury or loss, and discrimination.

Protect NAIT's and others' intellectual property.
NAIT has a long-established policy of respecting the intellectual property (copyright) of others, and of protecting its own intellectual property. Just as we take care in our physical-world activities to avoid infringement of intellectual property rights and to provide proper attribution of such rights, so we must in our activities in social networking environments.

Encounters with inappropriate behavior.
NAIT strives to create an environment that is safe and comfortable for all. However, NAIT cannot control and is not responsible for the activity inside virtual worlds or within social networking environments. If you are in a virtual environment in conjunction with your work/studies at NAIT and you encounter behavior that would not be acceptable inside NAIT, you should "walk away" or even sign out of the virtual environment. You should report abuse to the service provider and your NAIT Instructor. And as always, if you encounter an inappropriate situation in a virtual environment which you believe to be related to or associated with NAIT, you should bring this to the attention of your NAIT instructor, or your supervisor, as well as your service provider.

- *Adapted from IBM Virtual World Guidelines, courtesy of International Business Machines, copyright 2008 © International Business Machines Corporation"*