



McGill

MCGILL UNIVERSITY SENATE

Question

TO:

Senate

DATE SUBMITTED:

March 28, 2008

FROM:

Mr. John Hobbins

SENATE MEETING DATE:

April 16, 2008

SUBJECT: Administrative access to user files – McGill Computing Facilities

PREAMBLE:

Use of the McGill Computing Facility (MCF) is governed by the Code of Conduct for Users of McGill Computing Facilities, and its ancillary documents Companion Document to (Code of Conduct) Policy and Management Guidelines. Adopted and unrevised since 1994, they remain the current policies and still appear on the website of the Chief Information Officer. Under these policies and guidelines, user files are considered confidential and not open to access by others unless there was a compelling reason. Such reasons would be protection of the MCF or suspicion that the user was using the MCF inappropriately. The clear intent of the policy is that when such access occurs the user should be notified beforehand unless there is some strong reason to the contrary. In such cases the user should be notified as soon as possible following the access. In view of this:

QUESTION:

1. a) Is such access by administrators reported to the CIO/Provost? If so, can the Administration report the number of times that user files have been accessed, in the past three years and the types of reasons why files are accessed? Were the users informed even afterwards, that such access had taken place? And if not, why not?

b) If such access is not reported to the CIO, would the Provost take measures to ensure such reporting occurs as soon as possible?

2. What plans does the Administration have to update the existing policies so users will know under what conditions their files on the MCF are subject to administrative scrutiny, and what safeguards will exist against arbitrary and unreasonable access?