

Parent Documents

What is Office 365?

Office 365 is the same Office you already know and use every day. Because Office 365 is powered by the cloud, you can get to your applications and files from virtually anywhere—PC, Mac, and tablets—and they are always up to date. Same applies for updates to features—you get them automatically. With Office Online, use touch-friendly applications to create, edit, and share your Office files from any browser. You can share and work on docs at the same time as others and avoid versioning hassles later.

Why am I using Office 365?

Microsoft office 365 uses a common file format that allows for multi platform saving and opening of documents. It is also the newest version of Microsoft Office and thus the most up to date. Schools are also able to get a group license for Microsoft 365 which allows everyone (staff, teachers, and students) to access the programs. With everyone using the same version of the program, compatibility and style issues associated with different versions will be greatly reduced.

Risks that could arise

The biggest risk involved with using Office 365 would be the ability to load personal information on to Microsoft's One Drive. The administrative settings can be changed to limit this with respect to the user accounts being offered by the school, however there is always a possibility of this being worked around and personal information being sent that may be against PIPA regulations.

What's 'personal information'?

"People have different standards of what they consider 'personal' information. Sharing over social media has done a fair bit to reset our expectation. Regardless of personal definition, if the information, data, or content could be used to identify you, it's 'personal information' – though professional or business contact information may be treated separately." ¹(Henglstler, 2013). A student's personal information could include: name, date of birth, address, telephone number, email address, educational information, and anything that identifies an individual, including photographs. If any information, data or content could be used to identify you it is then qualified as "personal information".

Why is BC so sensitive to privacy laws regarding data?

"Shortly after the 9/11 attacks on the US in 2001, the American government enacted the United States Patriot Act that allowed the United States government to search private and public data housed on servers on United States soil. At the time, The BC Medical Services Plan was hosting our provincial medical records in the United States. Unions in BC expressed concern over the ability of the American government to search through British Columbian's personal medical records and histories. Ultimately, the rule is: if you transfer or authorize the transfer of your personal information outside of Canada, that data is subject to the laws and practices of the country where it sits – be it the United States, China, or India. (Remember that minors, under the legal care of an adult, cannot authorize such a transfer.) Not all

Changes may occur; this document is current as of terms of service on Sept. 8, 2014. Check with your own school to make sure it meets your school's privacy policy. Review completed by Breanne Quist.

locations have similar notions about your right to privacy. Since cloud computing is a relatively new technology, the laws and best practices governing it are still changing and there is a need to stay current.”¹(Hengstler, 2013)

Why is a consent form necessary?

Various provinces in Canada – and other jurisdictions across the world – have enacted laws to protect personal privacy. In BC, the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) covers all independent schools. It is one of the most defined privacy protection frameworks in Canada. PIPA states that ‘private bodies’ such as independent schools have defined legal requirements for handling your personal information when it is within their ‘custody’ and ‘control’. Generally, private bodies must make sure that your personal information cannot be stored or accessed outside of Canada without your expressed permission – ‘consent’ (Note: there are certain expectations in the law like data covered by treaties, etc.). PIPA states that your consent must be in writing, state to whom your personal information may be disclosed, and how your information will be used. Also, if you post personal information about others, their permission must also be secured.

What if I don’t want to consent?

You have the right as a parent/guardian to withhold consent to your child using Office 365. Alternate activities and resources will be provided to students in the event that parents/guardians choose to withhold consent and that selection of an alternate activity will not affect a student’s grade.

While no internet-based experience can ever be 100% risk-free, know that I will take every reasonable measure to manage expected risks.

^[1] Julia Hengstler is the Educational Technologist with the Faculty of Education at Vancouver Island University & an Instructor in Educational Technology. Please visit this site for more background information about her:
http://www.viu.ca/education/faculty/profiles/hengstler_j.asp