

## ABSTRACT

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### Analyses Of Acceptable Use Policies Regarding The Internet In Selected K-12 Schools In The United States

The purpose of this study was to investigate the presence, origins, contents and purposes of Internet Acceptable Use Policies being used to address issues and concerns surrounding the Internet in 100 selected K-12 schools in the United States. The implementation practices of educators utilizing AUPs and the attitudes of educators toward the Internet were also examined. The study also investigated the number and location of Internet connections in the selected K-12 schools. A researcher-developed online survey was used to collect descriptive data in conjunction with qualitative data collected from a content analysis of 24 selected AUPs to address the purpose of this study and to answer the eight research questions presented to guide the research process. Descriptive analysis of the survey data was presented by frequency and percent. Qualitative analysis of the content analysis data was presented in narrative form. Data from the two sources were compared for confirmation and validation of the findings. The theoretical framework for the study was based on qualitative research theory and organizational communication theory. The findings indicated that K-12 schools were utilizing AUPs to address the Internet. The data indicated that AUPs were developed by educators usually at the district or school level. The key issues and concerns addressed in AUPs were found to be within four areas: liability, online behavior, system integrity, and quality of the content of materials on the Internet. Data suggested that the most common resource utilized to develop AUPs was the Internet policies of other schools or school districts. Access to the Internet was found to vary from school to school with regard to number and location of connections. Most of the AUPs examined were developed for preventive reasons. The major intent of the policy writers appeared to be an effort to provide access to the Internet while at the same time protecting the rights of individual users and disclaim the liability of the schools as Internet service providers. The general attitudes of educators toward the Internet were positive; tempered with legal, ethical, pedagogical, social, and economic concerns and issues.