

**Information Technology – David Steinour, Vice Provost of IT**  
**Effective Date(s): 1/22/2004**

**Title:** Gettysburg College Network Game and Port Policy

**Applicability:** Students, Faculty, Administrators and Staff

**Summary:** Security features on the Gettysburg College computer network may interfere with or prevent computer games or gaming devices from working when attached to the Gettysburg College Network. This policy explains why individual requests for opening "ports" cannot be honored.

**Please read the Details section to better understand this Policy and the restrictions that may apply.**

**Contacts:** Michael B. Hayden, Director, Infrastructure and Operations, Information Technology

**Details:**

**1. Introduction**

Hundreds of different software games and gaming devices exist today and more are written every week. The gaming software industry in particular is undergoing spectacular growth and popularity. Increasingly these hardware and/or software games are "Internet ready" and frequently connect up to other online players for gaming, special effects or chatting.

All this connectivity and Internet activity requires communication "ports" on both ends of the computer connection. Different numbered ports are used to open communications channels between the various computers playing the games at any one time. To further complicate things, different games often use different ports so they don't interfere or compete with one another.

**2. Policy**

Most institutions, and Gettysburg is no exception, have a firewall in place that helps protect the campus network from abuse by hackers and evil-doers in the outside world. Unneeded ports and those frequently the target of known exploitation are generally blocked by the firewall in the interest of security. Were the College to open up ports in order that all games would always work now and into the future, we would have less and less security until we had none at all. And for an institution that has sensitive educational, personal and business information on their network, security must be maintained at all times.

It is recreationally unfortunate that the security of the network may occasionally interfere with the proper operation of a particular game(s), but the need to maintain a secure network must take precedence. We regret that individual requests to "open up" specific ports cannot be accommodated.

A specific list of open and closed ports is not available due to security concerns. Generally stated, the College does not block ports above 1024 unless they need to be blocked to prevent a security issue.

No games are intentionally blocked, however some games and game devices may not work on our network because they need ports that are blocked for other reasons.

The Network Use Policy governs the use of gaming software and gaming devices. Please refer to our web pages located here: <http://www.gettysburg.edu/it/policies.html> for other important IT policies.