

Encryption: The Key to Data Security

In today's rapidly changing technical environment, computers are becoming more mobile while data storage devices (e.g. smart phones, flash drives, iPads) are not only getting smaller but also holding more data. Due to the portability and ease of access to such devices the need to understand data sensitivity and protection is increasing. At the University, much of the data that is stored on these devices is considered sensitive and falls under some form of regulation. A data security requirement common to all of these regulations is to **encrypt** sensitive data when it is stored on a computing device. What is encryption? Encryption is a procedure that scrambles or codes data making it unrecognizable to unauthorized users or systems.

In order to comply with data protection rules outlined in many regulations and contracts, the University has created a policy requiring that all sensitive University data (e.g. credit card, patient, student and certain research data) must be encrypted. As the owner, custodian or user of sensitive data, it is your responsibility to be aware of and to comply with the appropriate data protection requirements. Please familiarize yourself the University's Data Encryption policy which can be found at: <http://security.louisville.edu/PolStds/ISO/ISO/PS018.htm>.

Not sure if this applies to you? Below are some questions to help determine if your computer, tablet, smart phone, or flash drive should be encrypted:

- Does the device contain sensitive information that falls under regulations such as, but not limited to HIPAA, FERPA, and/or PCI-DSS?
- Does my research grant contract state that all research data gathered for the project or for a 3rd party must be encrypted?
- Do I receive and store emails, texts, or audio-visual content containing sensitive information to my smart phone or tablet computer?

The University of Louisville has a solution when it comes to protecting sensitive data! The University provides, free of charge, an encryption solution to ensure the protection of sensitive University data that is being stored on one of these devices, and it is available for FREE from the iTechXpress store.

Encryption solutions may vary depending on the operating system, device, and user preference. For help on what encryption option would work best for you, please contact the Information Security Office at isopol@louisville.edu or (502) 852-0567. The [Information Security Office](#) is always available to help determine and implement the appropriate security solution for your individual situation.

Data security is one of the many high-risk compliance areas reviewed during the annual compliance risk assessment conducted by the University of Louisville's [Institutional Compliance Office](#) in conjunction with the [Information Security Office](#). Compliance officials are available to help ensure the University complies with the 350+ federal, state, and local requirements identified as part of this annual process. A [directory](#) of these officials is available on the Institutional Compliance Office's website at <http://louisville.edu/compliance>.