

EPOC Network Data Privacy Policy

May 29, 2025

I. Introduction

The Engagement and Performance Operations Center (EPOC) uses the NetSage measurement and monitoring tool (<https://netsage.io>) to gather network data for use in understanding file transfer performance and debugging user data transfer issues. The NetSage tool is an open privacy-aware network measurement, analysis, and visualization service designed to better understand the behaviors and needs of today's research and education (R&E) networks.

Although currently in use by other projects, the NetSage Project was originally funded by the US National Science Foundation (NSF) International Research Network Connection (IRNC) program to better understand the use of the IRNC-funded backbone networks and exchange points. In much the same way as other large-scale NSF facilities track their end users, the NetSage tool was created to understand the use of the IRNC networks.

The EPOC project uses the NetSage Tool to understand and visualize large data flows associated with research, education, and science projects for its associated partners, and also uses this data to debug performance issues. EPOC works with *Community Partners* to collect data from networks, exchange points, high performance computing centers, and archives associated with those partners and with their partners' permission. For a list of current EPOC NetSage deployments, please see <https://netsage.io>. The data is de-identified and used to understand the network behaviors of large flows and to better understand the general use and functionality of the monitored networks and exchange points.

The EPOC data privacy policy for data collected by the NetSage tool strives to balance the privacy interests of users whose data transits the monitored networks, the operational needs of the EPOC project and the Community Partners, and the need to demonstrate the broader benefit of NSF-funded resources. We are committed to protecting privacy and informing interested parties about our policies and practices.

II. Scope of this Policy

This policy identifies:

- The information the NetSage tool collects about data transferred by its infrastructure;
- The ways in which this information may be used and disclosed to third parties; and
- The security measures adopted for this information.

III. What Information Is Collected?

The NetSage tool can collect *active* networking data (for example, latency and throughput from a tool such as perfSONAR) and *passive* network metadata (for example, SNMP and flow data). This data may consist of packet headers in addition to performance data, but never contains payload data from flows. Data sets are de-identified at the source before being stored. The

NetSage tool uses current accepted practices in the R&E community, namely de-identifying the IP addresses in a prefix-preserving manner, to remove personally identifiable information. The archived data does not contain information about traffic flows specific to individual users. Community Partners may choose to release additional data, however that data is not part of this policy.

IV. Disclosure of Data

EPOC is the steward of all the network data it collects. EPOC, at the direction of the EPOC project lead, shares network data under the following circumstances:

1. Network data for a specific Community Partner is made available on NetSage portals on a partner-specific platform. For example, TACC data is available at <https://tacc.netsage.io>. A full list of NetSage pages supported by EPOC is detailed at <https://netsage.io>.
2. EPOC Community Partner data is shared on an EPOC-all portal, <https://epoc.netsage.io>.

V. How Data Is Collected, Retained, and Protected

All network data is managed under the control of EPOC project members authorized by the EPOC Lead at the Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC), at The University of Texas at Austin.

EPOC takes appropriate steps to protect collected network data from unauthorized access or disclosure. Additionally, EPOC employs industry standard security measures to protect against the disclosure, loss, misuse, and alteration of the information under our control.

VI. Notice for Updates and Changes to Policy

This document is derived from the original NetSage project data privacy document, which was derived from ESnet's privacy policy (available at <https://www.es.net/about/governance/data-privacy-policy/>), which itself is derived from an earlier version of the Internet2's policy on privacy of network flow data (available at <https://internet2.edu/security/routing-security/network-flow-data-privacy-policy/>). EPOC reserves the right to update this privacy policy at any time to reflect changes in the manner in which it deals with traffic, whether to comply with applicable regulations and self-regulatory standards, or otherwise. The Privacy Policy posted here will always be current. We encourage you to review this statement regularly.

VII. Who to Contact if You Have Questions

If you have any questions about this privacy policy, please contact Dr. Jennifer M. Schopf, the EPOC project lead, at jmschopf@tacc.utexas.edu.