



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-12-05-0023

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We received an allegation that an OIG laptop computer that had been processed internally at NSF for repairs and a baseline operating system “image” was returned to the user containing pornographic picture files, suggesting mishandling and misconduct during the repairs.

We verified the presence of illicit material on the computer, and determined that, contrary to the recollections of staff, the computer that had been turned in for repairs was not the same computer returned to the user. The computer containing the picture files had been previously used by another staff member while on travel during an investigation. The picture files and other information, which were legitimate investigative materials in the matter, had been loaded onto the computer for temporary use, but never deleted when the computer was returned to the IT inventory. The user received this computer (identical in appearance to her original computer, except for NSF barcode and serial number) instead of the one she originally turned in for service.

The computer turned in by the user for repairs, having not been returned to the user, became available for other staff use following the repairs, and was issued as a routine matter to another user. Thus, our investigation revealed deficiencies in equipment handling and accountability, but no misconduct.

Accordingly, this case is closed with no further action taken.