MILWAUKEE COUNTY
USE OF TECHNOLOGIES POLICY

December 16, 1999

ATTENTION

Failure on the part of a Milwaukee County employee/user to follow any part of this policy may result in the employee/user being subject to progressive steps of discipline, which may include discharge from Milwaukee County service. An employee/user may also be subject to civil and/or criminal prosecution.

Purpose

The use of technology that meets ethical standards and provides access to information, education or experience is allowable and encouraged under this policy. Milwaukee County ("County") recognizes that access to and the use of technologies is an effective means for making government more accessible, efficient and responsive to the needs of other agencies and the public. With access, however, comes agency and individual responsibility.

The purpose of this policy is to protect the County's technical and information infrastructure by governing the use of technologies provided by the County to its employees and users, and the resulting access to electronic mail, Internet and online services and to protect the County and its employees from any abuse of the technologies provided by the County, either from employees or third parties, and to provide a means for sanctioning the improper use or abuse of these technologies. The use of County-provided technologies is no different from the use of any other County-provided item in the workplace--employee's actions must comply with applicable statutes, orders, codes and other applicable rules and regulations.

It is in the best interests of the County to encourage its employees or other persons legitimately affiliated with the County to learn and use the new technologies that are fundamental to their success, and thereby the success of the County. The County's provision of technologies--including its connections to the global Internet--exist to facilitate the official work of the County. The appropriate use of the technologies, Internet facilities and online services will contribute broadly to the mission of the County.

This policy is in addition to the Security Policy and Guidelines resolution, File No. 92-546, adopted by the County Board of Supervisors on September 24, 1992 as it applies to data processing security for departments served by the Information Management Services Division (IMSD).

Definition of Technologies

For the purpose of this policy, technologies in the work environment shall refer to a wide array of equipment and/or software, including, but not limited to: analog and digital telephone services (voice mail, message broadcasting, message/call forwarding), facsimile (fax) machines and servers, image scanning and copying equipment, shared and stand-alone computers (both fixed and portable) and their peripherals, pagers (text and voice), cellular phones, data networks, dial-up network facilities, global positioning systems (GPS), radios (VHF, UHF, 800 MHz, 800 MHz trunked, fixed and portable units), and wireless services.

Electronic Mail

Definition. Electronic mail (e-mail) is the transmission of information typically in the form of electronic messages, memoranda and attached documents. Transmission occurs between a sending party and one or more receiving parties via an intermediate telecommunications system, including, but not limited to the Internet.

Purpose. E-mail can provide a quick and cost-effective means of communication. When used properly, it can expedite business communications, reduce paperwork, and automate routine office tasks, thereby increasing productivity and reducing costs.

Right of Privacy. Users have no right of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the County's technologies, either via e-mail or other means. Anything created using technologies is likely to be reviewed by others. All e-mail transmissions sent or received using the County's technologies are County property.

Privacy in Communication. Electronic transmissions or communication shall not be considered either private or completely secure. Transmissions may be stored indefinitely on any number of computers, including that of the recipient. Material received electronically might be forwarded to others electronically or on paper. Transmissions sent to invalid or non-existent addresses might be delivered to unintended recipients, either purposely or inadvertently. E-mail can often be traced to the sender even after it has been "deleted." In the event of litigation, the County may be required to produce e-mail records, electronic files, or other materials.

Receipt of Inappropriate Material. Users are not permitted to print, display, download or send sexually explicit images, messages, cartoons, jokes or any other material disparaging or harassing to anyone on the basis of race, sex, disability, age, religion, or national origin. If such material is received, and if feasible, recipient shall immediately advise sender that receipt of such transmission is not permitted and must stop. If assistance is needed in responding to the receipt of inappropriate material, the matter is to be referred to the user's supervisor or the Information Management Services Division Manager.

Content. Employees and users should take the same care in drafting and sending e-mail and other electronic documents as they would for any other written communication. Anything created using the County's technologies is an extension of and directly reflects on the County. Excessive messages with little value to the County decrease productivity and congest the County's network.

Chain E-Mail. Chain e-mail refers to a transmission (message or document) sent to a number of recipients that asks each recipient to forward copies with the same request to one or more other recipients for no specific business purpose. The sending of chain e-mail is not permitted.

Forwarding Electronic Mail. Users may forward e-mail to any other recipient or entity without the express permission of the sender, unless the e-mail is marked as confidential. Users must realize that the original recipient could potentially send any e-mail to others.

Fee-Based Resources. Certain e-mail or online services available via the Internet or from other providers may result in user fees, usage charges or membership fees.

Retention of Electronic Mail Files. Unless directed to the contrary by his or her supervisor, a user should discard inactive e-mail after sixty (60) days. E-mail transmissions that should properly become part of a longer term or permanent file should be printed and inserted into the appropriate file or merged with an existing records series for future reference, use and/or archival purposes. Retention periods for all County records, including paper records and e-mail, are subject to retention schedules as approved by the Milwaukee County Records Committee (County Administrative Code 56.14 and County Administrative Procedure 3.02). The County regards e-mail as a tool to facilitate daily communications between users, rather than an archival storehouse for non-current communications. Departments may choose to coordinate the retention of e-mail files with their departmental records custodian.

Internet and Online Services

Definition. The Internet is the rapidly expanding worldwide "network of networks" connected to each other. It is a collection of computers, computer networks, communication protocols, information servers and individual users connected together in a global community. It is not a single network; rather, it is a group of thousands of individual networks which allow traffic (computer messages) to pass among them using a common communications protocol called Transmission Control Protocol/ Internet Protocol (TCP/IP).

Purpose. The Internet provides for information browsing, file transfer and download, remote log-in, electronic mail, informational bulletin boards, news, reference and research services, information sharing, information exchange services, economic development and other services.

Accuracy of Information. Any information obtained via the Internet may not be factual or correct. Users shall take appropriate steps to ascertain the accuracy of information before use.

Right of Privacy. Users have no right of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the County's technologies, either via the Internet or other means. Anything created using technologies is likely to be reviewed by others. All e-mail transmissions sent or received using the County's technologies are County property.

Privacy in Communication. Electronic transmissions or communication shall not be considered either private or completely secure. Transmission may be stored indefinitely on any number of computers, including that of the recipient. Material received electronically might be forwarded to others either electronically or on paper. Transmissions sent to invalid or non-existent addresses might be delivered to unintended recipients, either purposely or inadvertently.

Viruses and Downloading. Any information that is received or downloaded via the Internet may contain viruses. Virus-scanning shall be conducted on any file received, prior to opening. Unsolicited or suspect transmissions or files should be left unopened until a proper investigation is made.

Home Page or Web Site Creation. Users shall not create or post external home pages or develop external web sites using County-provided Internet and online services without the prior review and approval of the respective department administrator and the Information Management Services Division Manager or designee. When authorized, the creation of all home pages and web sites shall comply with established standards for publication and posting.

Tracking of Home Page and/or Site Visits. Use of the Internet, especially via browsers, leaves "footprints" providing a trace of all site visits for both the County and the publishers of visited sites, directly reflecting on the County.

Time Limits. Internet access via the County's server(s) will be available 24 hours a day, seven days per week, apart from planned outages, technical difficulties or malfunctions. Internet sessions shall be terminated when a user's business is concluded. The length of ongoing, continuously-connected Internet sessions shall be governed by the business needs of the department or agency. Under no circumstances shall an Internet session be maintained continuously without activity.

Discussion Groups. The Internet offers numerous discussion groups or forums where users may post messages and exchange ideas for the purpose of research and information sharing. As with any form of communication, County policies shall not be intentionally misrepresented in any material posted to the Internet.

Personal Use of Technologies

Users may be permitted, at management's discretion and with prior approval, to use the County's technologies for personal activities. Nonetheless, users are reminded that use of technologies may directly reflect on the County, and must be used with sound judgment so as not to embarrass the County. Prior to engaging in personal activities, users must ascertain which equipment, if any, may be used for personal activities, as designated by management.

Rights of Milwaukee County

- The County owns all technologies provided at its own expense, or under its authority or jurisdiction, including transmissions initiated, received or stored using its technologies.
- The County reserves the right to determine who is provided access to its technologies.
- At any time and without prior notice, the County may remove an employee/user account from any of its equipment or networks.
- The County may monitor and/or log network use, capacity, and space utilization.
- County management has the right to know users' passwords.
- At any time and without prior notice, the County may access or examine electronic mail and/or monitor messages on its equipment or networks.
- At any time and without prior notice, the County may access or examine files or any other materials stored on its equipment or networks.
- Using either human or automated means, the County may monitor, log and/or examine Internet activities, including, but not limited to: site visits, chat groups, news groups, downloaded material or uploaded material.
- The County may archive or delete files or any other materials on its equipment or networks, as deemed necessary.

Prohibited Uses of Technologies

- Engaging in any activity which violates state law, federal law, County Administrative Code, the Civil Service Rules or departmental work rules, as applicable.
- Engaging in activities during working hours for personal gain, solicitation or commercial purposes, including commercial advertising, unless specific to the charter, mission or duties of the department or agency.
- Engaging in personal activities without prior approval or engaging in personal activities that may embarrass the County.
- Accessing or distributing indecent material, obscene material, child pornography or any material that violates County's affirmative action principles or the civil rights (race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, political beliefs, national origin, health or disability) of an individual.
- Harassing other users, including sending chain or inflammatory material.
- Loading personally-owned or improperly licensed software on County-owned equipment.

- Obligating the County for user fees, usage charges or membership fees without authorization.
- Damaging computing systems or damaging or altering the software components of same.
- Engaging in fund raising, political campaign activities, or public relations activities not specifically related to County government activities.
- Engaging in any activity which adversely affects the availability, confidentiality or integrity of any County-provided technology.
- Disseminating or printing copyrighted materials (including articles and software) in violation of copyright laws.
- Disseminating information that is known to misrepresent the County or be false, inaccurate or misleading.
- Using another's network, Internet, electronic mail or online service account or password without authorization.
- Creating or posting external home pages or web sites without authority.
- Disabling or circumventing virus protection software or otherwise compromising security.
- Using a digital signature other than his or her own without authority.

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