

Vernon County Computer Resources

Computer Use Policy

PROCEDURE NUMBER	0408-2
ORIGINAL EFFECTIVE DATE	NEW EFFECTIVE DATE
04/17/07	07/08/08
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MANUAL SECTION	PAGE	1	OF	6
Information Technology (IT) Resources				
COMMITTEE APPROVAL DATE:		July 8, 2008		
SUBJECT:				
Use of VCCR Information Technology Resources (E-mail, Internet and Computer access)				

I. Introduction

The Internet and e-mail have emerged as valuable and cost-effective tools for Vernon County employees. However, press reports and court cases from around the country underscore the fact that these technologies can also pose potential problems for both employers and individual employees. Vernon County's Internet and E-Mail Usage Policy is designed to encourage the appropriate use of the Internet and e-mail, while also minimizing security risks. These guidelines encourage all Vernon County employees to use common sense when they use the Internet, e-mail or other computer resources. While the department has the ability to monitor users' Internet usage, we do not do so routinely. Our employees are trusted colleagues and are expected to use all business tools appropriately. However, if instances of abuse of Internet access become more prevalent, more active monitoring may be needed. All employees using Internet and e-mail resources are also reminded that the department's Internet and e-mail files may be subject to disclosure under the state and federal public records laws. The department may install filters to block access to inappropriate Internet sites; however, the fact that access to a particular site is not blocked does not necessarily mean that it is an appropriate site.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to direct users in the use of the Vernon County Computer Resources (VCCR) Information Technology (IT) resources, including but not limited to computer, email and the Internet, which is acceptable to VCCR and the public. This policy is designed to help the Vernon County users understand the expectations for the appropriate use of IT resources.

III. Scope

This policy applies to all Vernon County IT resource users. For the purpose of this policy, users are defined as any person such as elected, full time, part time, project, limited term employees and appointed positions, including contractors, consultants, volunteers, interns, students and business partners, who use the Department's IT resources.

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IV. Definitions

Internet/WorldWideWeb (WWW): A network connecting thousands of networks worldwide. It offers a wealth of information relevant to criminal justice agencies, medical, education and treatment programs, research and correctional practices, as well as vital management tools, information systems, and databases.

Password: Sequence of characters required for access to a computer, network or program. Passwords or passphrases help provide security by ensuring that only authorized persons have access.

Computer access: Access granted to a Vernon County user for use of VCCR IT resources

Resources: includes but is not limited to access to email, internet, data and applications, software, licenses, and consulting services

Hardware: laptops, secure identification devices, digital cameras, personal device assistance (PDA), peripherals (i.e., speakers, zip drives).

V. Department Focus

The primary focus of VCCR is to design, implement, and maintain the data network for all county departments to provide the highest levels of security and availability possible. Priority status is given to departments with mission critical applications. Secondary focus of the department is user workstation support, user training, and application support. The county website will be maintained and updated as time permits.

VI. Policy

It is the policy of VCCR to provide staff with access to IT resources, including computers, email, and the Internet when the access will enhance productivity, improve programs and services, and contribute to the effective and efficient operation of the County. Access to IT resources will be provided for users within the security framework of VCCR. A Department Head may submit written requests for exceptions.

All IT resources, hardware, software, applications, and data, including e-mail and Internet access are the property of Vernon County. IT resource users of Vernon County should have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality regarding the use of IT resources. Vernon County reserves the right to monitor e-mail, Internet usage, directories, and folders of its employees in the ordinary course of business. **Terminated or suspended users relieved of job responsibilities, regardless of paid status, shall not have network access of any type. The computer department shall be notified immediately by the department head and/or the personnel department of any changes in employment status of any network user.**

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1. All IT resources, including computers, applications, e-mail, data and files that are related to any business activity of Vernon County, are the property of Vernon County and could be **SUBJECT TO OPEN RECORD LAWS OR SUBPOENA.**
2. Internet access will be included in the standard setup for all Vernon County users. In individual cases the immediate supervisor can request that access be denied.
3. User passwords, including personal, application, and network, must not be shared. Individual users shall be held accountable for incidents related to the unauthorized use of their password or incidents related to sharing a password. **Passwords will be required to be changed every 90 days.**
4. Users with passwords and network authority must not use this privilege to gain access to any workstation, server or user folders beyond that which is a specifically assigned work responsibility.
5. Users must not automate any login or password process.
6. Employees are responsible for ensuring the security of IT resources at all locations, including never providing access to unauthorized users and ensuring that work stations are never left unsecured. **Users shall lock their work station when they are not present. Desktops shall be set to automatically lock after 15 minutes of inactivity. Workstations in secured areas shall be set to lock after 60 minutes of inactivity.**
7. Users shall, at all times, respect the privacy, copyright, and licensing laws related to both programs and data. Any users violating privacy, copyright, or licensing agreements may be held personally responsible for any financial impact of such violation.
8. Users shall not install any unauthorized software from the Internet or load programs or applications using disk or CD drives. Use of unauthorized or non-Vernon County licensed software is prohibited. Games are prohibited. Personal screen savers are allowed as long as they do not violate copyright laws or jeopardize the Vernon County network. Internet browser toolbars may be removed without notice.
9. Prior to posting any information on the Internet, an employee must obtain approval from the respective department supervisor to ensure that the information reflects the standards and policies of Vernon County. Blanket approvals may be given for individuals who are required to post information to the Internet as part of their employment responsibilities.
10. Users shall not install or attach any personally owned software or devices to IT resources owned by Vernon County.

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11. Under no circumstance shall Vernon County information of a confidential nature (i.e., medical records, employee personnel information), be made available (including placing information on the Internet or sending e-mail via the Internet) to any unauthorized individual or authority. Confidential information includes specific security protocols or network specific information such as IP (Internet Protocol) addresses.
12. Users shall not send unauthorized confidential information to any electronic address outside of the county system.
13. Unless required by job function or special need, the Internet shall not be used to listen to or load any continuous feed such as changing stock market updates or weather updates.
14. Users shall not encrypt files or take any steps that block access to files unless specifically required to protect confidential or sensitive information related to a Vernon County business activity or requirement.
15. IT Resources shall not be used to send or participate in chain letters, pyramid schemes, game playing, gambling, or other illegal activity.
16. Users shall not save or archive non-work related material to group folders, the individual users' home directories, or e-mail folders.
17. Users must not send e-mail under other than their own name unless specifically authorized as part of assigned work responsibilities.
18. Users shall not probe or test security; unauthorized possession or use of special tools for cracking security is prohibited. Users must not probe or test security unless specifically cracking the network is authorized in writing by VCCR management.
19. Remote users shall only access Vernon County IT resources through an approved VCCR access device.
20. Modem connections to workstations used by VCCR are prohibited, unless installed and maintained by VCCR.
21. In their use of E-mail, employees shall use generally accepted standards of business conversation. They shall utilize good judgment in the type of messages created as well as the tone and content of those messages. Content shall always be construed as personal opinion unless it is specifically set forth as County or departmental position.
22. Users must understand that it is possible that they may be exposed to unsolicited, obscene or objectionable material while using e-mail or the Internet.

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VII. Examples of Acceptable Use of IT Resources

1. Access and communications related to Vernon County business.
2. Access, subscriptions, and communications related to professional development of staff as related to their job duties or the Department's mission.
3. Authorized work-related postings to the Internet, newsgroups, bulletin boards, and conference boards, etc.
4. Limited personal use of Vernon County IT resources (i.e., the Internet). However, usage must be outside the employee's normal working hours, e.g., lunch, breaks, or nonscheduled hours.
5. Personal usage to manage personal affairs that would be acceptable by phone, such as reviewing personal bank balances, transferring funds between personal accounts, or purchasing items with personal funds. In general, if the exchange of information would be acceptable in person or by phone, it is acceptable to use the Internet.
6. If you find yourself connected unintentionally to a site that contains sexually explicit or other offensive material, you must disconnect from that site immediately.
7. Vernon County retains the copyright to any material created by users in the course of their official duties, including materials posted to any forum, newsgroup or World Wide Web page by any user in the course of his or her duties.

VIII. Examples of Unacceptable Use of IT Resources

1. Knowingly accessing, creating, sending, saving, viewing, printing or downloading defamatory, abusive, obscene, pornographic, profane, sexually oriented, racially offensive, or any biased, discriminatory, or illegal material not specifically related to an approved work activity.
2. Using the Internet or email access for union activities unless such use is authorized by the relevant Collective Bargaining Agreement.
3. Soliciting the performance of any activity that is prohibited by law.
4. Transmitting material, information, or software in violation of any local, state, or federal law.
5. Conducting any political activity.
6. Gambling or game playing.

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7. Distributing email promoting political or religious views or beliefs.
8. Conducting any non-governmental-related fund raising or public relations activities (i.e. sending out an email message that your child is selling candy bars for a school fund raiser or that raffle tickets are available at your desk for The Lions Club raffle).
9. Engaging in any activity for personal gain.
10. Expressing or publishing any written statements or opinions that could be misconstrued as representing Vernon County unless explicit authority to do so has been granted.
11. Sending an email message of a personal nature to the media, the state legislature or other political body.
12. **Accessing a personal email account through the Internet. For example a personal email account such as lohn.doelZi@hotmail.com or lohn.doelZi@aol.com.**

IX. Network Performance Management

Authorized personnel routinely monitor the performance of IT systems. The Department uses software and systems that monitor and record Internet usage, e-mail usage and storage of material on network drives as part of performance monitoring. VCCR management reserves the right to apply these monitoring capabilities at any time without notification. Additionally, external Web sites can monitor and record information about each visitor for their purposes. **No Vernon County user should have any expectation of privacy as to their computer access and/or usage.**

X. Access, Confiscation, Search or Denial of Employee Access to Vernon County Resources

An appointing authority or designee may grant authorization for a limited review of an employee's IT resources to locate information for an appropriate business purpose (for example, an employee is absent and there is a legitimate business need to locate a Vernon County document). This review is not a work rule violation investigation but a business need for data. A non department head or elected official user's IT resources such as the home directory, software, system utilities, devices, computer, email account and/or hardware may be confiscated or searched and an employee may be denied access to IT resources with an approved **written** request from the County Attorney or District Attorney, and Supervising Department Head, County Board Chair, or County Board Governing Committee Chair. A department head or elected official user's IT resources such as the home directory, software, system utilities, devices, computer, email account and/or hardware may be confiscated or searched with an approved **written** request signed by the County Attorney or District Attorney and General Government chair or County Board chair. **All violations found by VCCR will be reported to human resources, and the department head or General Government Chair for appropriate disciplinary action(s).**