



## Information Technology

### Technology Resources (Internet, Technology Devices, E-mail, etc.) Acceptable Use Policy

Approved: December 19 2012

#### **POLICY / PURPOSE:**

This policy is intended to encourage responsible and acceptable use of the Internet, technology resources including computers, laptops, mobile phones, tablets, and other devices that may become available provided by Lincoln County, while continuing to support the needs of citizens and County employees. Any activities or actions that interfere with this policy are prohibited. The policy reflects a realization that efficient utilization of the Internet and other technology devices for communications and research can:

- Enhance partnership, community involvement and the exchange of information and ideas between citizens, businesses and local government.
- Provide information both internally and to the public about the activities and services of the County.
- Improve the quality, productivity and general cost-effectiveness of the County's work force.

Since technology is constantly evolving, Lincoln County requires its employees to use a common sense approach to the rules set in this policy, complying not only with the letter, but also the spirit of this policy. This policy applies to all regular and contract County employees, volunteers and other affiliates who use County-provided Internet facilities.

#### **WHO WILL RECEIVE INTERNET ACCESS AND /OR OTHER TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

A County Internet account and other technology resources are resources granted to increase productivity and provide opportunities for professional growth. They must be used with these goals in mind. Improper use could result in the cancellation of a user's County Internet account or return of other technology resources and disciplinary action.

Individuals desiring Internet access or other technology resources must first obtain approval of their departments. In addition, users must obtain specific permission from their department heads for news group, list server or chat access. These services can generate large volumes of email that has the potential to flood the County mail server. In general, it is advised that department heads only approve access for employees who would need frequent use of the Internet as a routine part of their jobs.

When a County employee with an Internet account leaves County employ, the department must notify the Information Technology Office immediately.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

At all times when an employee is using Lincoln County Internet or technology resources, he or she is representing the County. Each user of a County-provided Internet account is responsible and accountable thereupon for the proper use of that account. All communication over assigned Lincoln County property must be legal, ethical, responsible and decent regardless of its origin.

All Internet users are expected to know the tools, rules and etiquette concerning the use of the Internet and other technology devices, and behave accordingly.

## **ACCEPTABLE USE OF INTERNET AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

All users of Lincoln County Internet services and other technology resources:

- Must use the Internet and all other technology devices in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. This includes compliance with copyright and license laws covering programs, data and written material accessed, obtained or provided to others via the Internet.
- Must comply with all State and Federal laws and County policies and ordinances with regard to conflict of interest, solicitation, or violation of other worker's religious or political freedom.
- Are prohibited from using the County's Internet connections or other technology resources for private gain or profit.
- May not use the Internet or other technology resources for personal communications except on an incidental basis. Lincoln County recognizes the fact that the use of the internet, or e-mail for incidental purposes is not likely to strain County resources. However, personal communications should not be excessive or interfere with job performance. The employee may be required to reimburse the County for any and all fees incurred from the personal use of equipment.
- May not violate the privacy of others and must be sensitive to the fact that Internet news group postings, certain e-mail messages, Web sites and various other communications on the Internet are public.
- Must not use or transmit threatening, obscene, religious, politically oriented or harassing materials or images, nor engage in any form of sexual harassment. This rule applies to forwarding as well as originating such offensive material
- May not interfere with or disrupt any County network or Internet users, services, programs or equipment. Disruptions include but are not limited to propagation of computer worms, viruses or other debilitating programs, bulk e-mails, emails with unauthorized attachments, and using the County network to make unauthorized

entry to any other machine accessible via the network or Internet. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance will be viewed as criminal activity under applicable state and federal law.

- May not send any confidential information via Lincoln County Internet services or any other technology resource (Mobile phone texting, twitter, Facebook, etc.). Anytime information is transmitted through electronic media such as the Internet there is the possibility that it could be intercepted. Therefore, no confidential Lincoln County information may be transmitted electronically without the prior approval of the County Manager or County Attorney. If the employee is uncertain whether information is confidential, err on the side of caution and obtain approval before transmitting.
- Must clearly and accurately identify themselves when sending or forwarding E-mail, either internally or externally. Anonymous or pseudonymous posting is expressly forbidden.
- Electronic messages should not be intercepted or tampered with by individual users, nor should messages be encrypted or encoded.
- May not load software onto any Lincoln County computer system or other technology resource without the prior written approval of the IT office. This includes shareware, freeware, personal software or Internet distributed programs. The Internet provides easy access to software distributed by companies on a trial basis. The free access does not indicate that the software is free or that it may be distributed freely. Applicable software copyright laws and licensing agreements must be followed.
- May not share with others their assigned Internet passwords, access codes or other authentication devices. Passwords and access codes must not be written down and stored, posted anywhere, programmed into a macro or stored on the computer system. All Internet passwords, access codes or other authentication devices must be changed regularly.
- Must secure all technology resources assigned to them when they are not being used, to avoid use by unauthorized personnel.
- Must log off all County systems prior to departing for the day and prior to leaving for the weekend.
- Must not, the examine, modify, copy or delete files and/or data belonging to other employees without their consent, except as provided elsewhere in this policy.
- Must check computers enabled to accept files via the Internet (e.g., via FTP, email attachments or news groups) for viruses using the latest version of a reliable virus-checking program. Departments shall report all virus outbreaks to IT.

Any Department director who believes their employees need to meet additional standards for using the internet may develop departmental policies as long as they are consistent with those outlined above.

## **WEB PAGES**

In order to maintain a consistent, quality presence on the Internet, IT has established procedures that will assist departments in creating and publishing information on a web page.

- County departments interested in developing content for the Internet/World Wide Web must coordinate and receive approval from IT before information will be made available on the Internet.
- No County department may create or contract for its own physical Web site without the approval of the County Manager and the MIS Department.
- Information published on the Internet should be written in a clear and concise manner and presented in a graphically appealing format.
- IT can assist in adding links, audio, video, forms, databases and interactive segments to make webpages useful to the public.
- Once a web page is published, it is the ongoing responsibility of the department to ensure the timeliness and accuracy of the content the page. Significant changes to the content of web pages must receive approval from IT before the information is published on the Internet.
- IT will review all County-related Web pages on a periodic basis.

## **E-MAIL AND INTERNET - PUBLIC RECORD, TRACABLE AND NOT SECURE**

All employees should know that electronic mail (both internal and via the Internet) is considered to be a public record and may be subject to public disclosure or inspection from County officials in accordance with Public Records Law. Routine backup of electronic mail will occur as part of the system maintenance performed by IT. The use of e-mail passwords does not imply privacy or confidentiality.

A wide variety of information exists on the Internet. Some persons may find part of that information to be offensive or otherwise objectionable. Employees should be aware that the County has no control over and can therefore not be responsible for the content of information on the Internet other than what we as an organization place there.

The County's Internet host computers are traceable to the County. Persons using County-provided Internet accounts should not assume they are provided any degree of anonymity. Outside users who want to identify machines associated with the County can do so easily.

Employees also must understand that e-mail messages and other transfer of information via the Internet are currently not secure. Persons desiring to send someone confidential or sensitive communications should not use the Internet.

## **POLICY ENFORCEMENT**

IT and department directors will review reported and perceived violations of this policy. Department heads will be responsible for the enforcement of the County's Internet policy. Department heads will take remedial action when their staffs do not adhere to the Internet policy.

Violations may result in disciplinary action, including termination or any other action deemed necessary under this policy governing misuse of County equipment or under the Lincoln County disciplinary policy.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:** Information Technology Director 704-736-8432