



HERNANDO COUNTY
Board of County Commissioners

Policy Title: Technology Use	Effective Date:	July 1, 2000
	Revision Date(s):	August 1, 2003
	Latest Review:	February 1, 2007

Policy Statement:

This policy applies to all Internet access, electronic communications software and computer equipment attached to or used on the Hernando County network system and applies to all Hernando County owned software and hardware regardless of location or connectivity. The policy applies to all individuals using the Hernando County network system whether or not they are employees of Hernando County. The intent of this policy is to permit maximum freedom of use consistent with federal and state law, Hernando County policy, and a productive working environment.

Use of Hernando County computers and communication devices must comply with federal law, Florida law, and Hernando County policies. Therefore, Hernando County computers and communication devices may not be used for commercial, profit-making, or political purposes, or to disseminate unsolicited information regarding religious or political beliefs. With the rapidly changing nature of electronic media developing among users of external on-line services and the Internet, this policy cannot provide guidelines for every possible situation. Instead, it expresses the County's philosophy and sets forth general principles for the use of Internet service and e-mail by all County departments.

Employees are responsible for complying with this policy. In order to ensure that employees are aware of the provisions of this policy, they will be required to acknowledge acceptance of it before being allowed access to Hernando County's electronic communications equipment. Department heads are responsible for monitoring employee use and taking disciplinary action

against employees in violation of this policy.

Procedure

A. APPLICABLE LAWS

1. Federal Copyright Law: Many intellectual works are copyrighted. The owner of a copyright holds the exclusive right to reproduce and distribute the work. Most computer programs and manuals are copyrighted, and care must be taken to comply with copyright laws.
2. State and Federal Trade Secret Laws: Many intellectual works are protected under trade secret laws. Owners consider some programs and many manuals “trade secrets”. There are civil and criminal penalties associated with disclosing this information to anyone not authorized to use the material. Unless authorized in writing by the owner of the trade secret, you should not disclose any material that contains trade secret declarations to anyone outside County government.
3. Software License Agreements: Most computer software is licensed to a specific user or a group of specific users. The license agreement is very specific as to the rights that the user has to operate the program and make additional copies of the program. There are civil and criminal penalties associated with breaking a license agreement.

B. COMPUTER SOFTWARE

1. Hernando County provides computers to its employees with software pre-installed. The County encourages employees to use this technology to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in providing services to the citizens of Hernando County. Since the County uses a fully integrated network system, any change to a single computer can affect the rest of the Hernando County network; because of this and due to our limited resources, the following procedures are mandatory:
 - a. All software on any computer attached to the Hernando County network or any other computer owned by Hernando County must be installed or uninstalled by Technology Services or individual departmental representatives approved by Technology Services.
 - b. All software must be configured and/or updated by Technology Services personnel or individual departmental representatives approved by Technology Services.
 - c. Hernando County will not permit the use of unauthorized copies of software on County computers. Any person illegally reproducing software can be

subject to civil and criminal penalties including fines and imprisonment. The County does not condone illegal copying of software under any circumstances and anyone who knowingly makes, uses, or otherwise acquires unauthorized software shall be appropriately disciplined.

- d. No County employee shall give County software to anyone unless the employee has both license agreements that provide for such distribution and the prior approval of Technology Services.
- e. Any employee who suspects that there may be a misuse of software within the County shall notify their supervisor, department head, or County administration whichever is most appropriate in the usual chain of command.
- f. All software used by the County on County computers will be purchased by the County using approved purchasing procedures.

C. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Internet service and e-mail are provided to Hernando County employees for conducting Hernando County business. Every elected official, department head, and employee has the responsibility of maintaining and enhancing the County's public image and to use County e-mail and the Internet in a productive manner.
- 2. Hernando County realizes that e-mail can be an efficient means of communication, similar to the telephone. Therefore, the County will allow for the occasional use of e-mail for personal communications. However, this practice shall be limited and shall not interfere with work responsibilities. To ensure that all employees are responsible, the following e-mail and Internet guidelines are established. Any improper use of the Internet or e-mail is not acceptable and will not be permitted.
 - A. Hernando County realizes that the Internet can be a valuable source of information that increases the productivity of County employees. At the department head's discretion, employees may also be permitted to use the Internet service for incidental personal matters.
 - B. Employees on the County's Internet service and e-mail may not transmit copyrighted materials. All users obtaining access to other companies or individuals materials must respect all copyrights and may not copy, retrieve, modify or forward copyrighted materials, except with express, written permission, or as a single copy for reference purposes only.
 - C. Users of the County Internet service and e-mail should conduct themselves in a professional manner. Access to the County Internet service and e-mail is a privilege, not a right, which may be revoked for inappropriate conduct.

It is the responsibility of every user to report any known misuse of the Internet or e-mail to his immediate supervisor, department head or County administration, as is appropriate following the chain of command.

D. OWNERSHIP

1. All messages or files created, sent, retrieved or downloaded over the County's e-mail/Internet system are the property of the County. With the exception of information made confidential by Florida Statute, the County reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the County's e-mail/Internet system. Do not assume electronic communications are totally private. Do not transmit highly confidential data using this medium. Also, deleted e-mails and a history of accessed web sites can be retrieved. All electronic communications systems and all information transmitted by, received from, or stored in these systems are the property of Hernando County. County employees and other users of the County's electronic communications systems should have no expectation of privacy or any personal privacy right in connection with the use of these systems, or with the transmission, receipt, or storage of information in these systems.

E. MONITORING

1. Department heads have the authority to request Technology Services to inspect the contents of any equipment, files, calendars, or electronic mail of their subordinates in the normal course of their managerial responsibilities. Reasons for review include, but are not limited to, system hardware or software problems, general system failure, regular system maintenance, a lawsuit against Hernando County, suspicion of a crime or violation of policy, review of employee work, a need to perform work, or to provide a service. Such review will occur only based upon a request from a department head or the County Administrator as appropriate.

F. PUBLIC RECORDS

1. Release of electronic records pursuant to a request for public information is governed by Chapter 286, Florida Statutes. Should you have a question about a particular request received in your department, contact the County Attorney's Office as soon as possible.

G. ACCEPTABLE USES

1. All communications sent electronically by employees via Hernando County's Internet service and e-mail must comply with this and other County policies and may not disclose any confidential or proprietary County information.
2. The following is a non-exhaustive list of acceptable uses of the Internet and e-mail:

- a. Communication and information exchange directly related to the duties or responsibilities of the user's department.
- b. Communication for professional development, to obtain continuing education or training, or to discuss issues related to the user's public duties or responsibilities.
- c. Announcement of new departmental regulations, procedures, policies, rules, services, programs, or activities.
- d. At the department head's discretion, employees are permitted to use the Internet service and e-mail for incidental personal matters.

H. UNACCEPTABLE USES

1. The following is a non-exhaustive list of uses of the Internet and e-mail that shall be deemed unacceptable unless the use was made by or at the specific request of a department director for a legitimate work purpose:
 - a. County Internet service and e-mail must not be used for knowingly transmitting, retrieving, or storing any communications that contain:
 1. Discriminatory or harassing language.
 2. Obscene, pornographic or x-rated material.
 3. Defamatory, abusive, threatening, profane, or offensive language.
 4. Chain letters and other non-business-oriented mass e-mails.
 5. Derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, age, disability, religion, national origin, or physical attributes.
 6. Racial and/or sexual slurs or jokes.
 7. Material related to gambling.
 8. Any material which is illegal or against County policy.
 - b. Attempting to read or hack into other systems or other person's log-ins, or crack passwords, or breach computer or network security measure.

- c. Developing programs designed to harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computer network or to damage or alter hardware or software.
- d. Using your computer or network services in a manner that is likely to cause network congestion or significantly hamper the ability of others to access and use the services or equipment.
- e. Intentionally seeking access to or copies of information, files, or data that is confidential under federal, state, or local law, unless specifically authorized to do so once the legal conditions for release are satisfied.
- f. Attaching private equipment and/or use private services for the express purpose of circumventing this policy.
- g. Participating in the development, propagation, or forwarding of computer viruses.
- h. Allowing or providing access for unauthorized personnel to use the County's network system including Internet service and e-mail.
- i. Identity Masking: No e-mail or other electronic communication may be sent which:
 - 1. Attempts to hide the identity of the sender or represents the sender as someone else.
 - 2. Adopts the identity of another person.
 - 3. Uses another person's password.
 - 4. Misrepresents the user's affiliation with Hernando County.
- j. Business Use: Except as specifically authorized above, all use of Hernando County's Internet service and e-mail must be for the benefit of Hernando County and must not be used:
 - 1. For any personal profit or gain.
 - 2. For purposes not directly or indirectly related to the job duties or responsibilities of the user before, after, or during normal business hours.
 - 3. For any non-County commercial or promotional purpose, including personal messages offering to buy or sell goods or services.

4. To sell or distribute Hernando County information, software, or services for personal gain or profit.
 5. In such a way that causes Hernando County to be charged a fee by another person or entity.
- k. Restricted Information: Hernando County's Internet service and e-mail must not be used:
1. To copy, retrieve, or forward copyrighted material (such as software, database files, documentation, articles, graphics files, and downloaded information) unless the individual has the right to copy or distribute such material.
 2. To communicate any material regarding confidential information from a person's personnel file, medical record, or information regarding a person's health condition, financial status, or a person's home address, telephone number, or social security number, unless expressly authorized to do so.

I. VIOLATIONS

1. Violation of this policy can lead to internal disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. In addition, criminal or civil administrative penalties may be imposed.
2. In the event that Hernando County incurs a cost due to an employee's negligence or misuse, the employee will be responsible for reimbursement of that cost.
3. There are a number of state and federal laws regarding computer crimes. Certain violations may result in a person being charged with a criminal offense.