

HERNANDO COUNTY CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT,
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, AND
SPRING HILL FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT

INTERNET USAGE REVIEW

March 25, 2003

HERNANDO COUNTY CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT
Audit Services
MEMORANDUM

TO: Richard "Dick" Radacky, County Administrator

FROM: Peggy Prentice, CIA, Audit Services Manager

VIA: Karen Nicolai, CPA, Clerk of Circuit Court

SUBJECT: Internet Usage Review

DATE: March 25, 2003

The Audit Services Department (ASD) performed a review of County employee (Clerk of Circuit Court, Board of County Commissioner, and Spring Hill Fire & Rescue District) Internet usage. The scope of work was limited to usage from September 2002 to March 7, 2003. ASD produced the attached report for your review.

Please forward a copy of this report to the Board of County Commissioners as an agenda "correspondence to note" item.

If you have any questions, concerns, or need additional information in regard to the above or the attached summary, please do not hesitate to contact me at 352-754-4201, extension 232, or just stop by my office.

ATTACHMENT

copy: CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT:

Amy Gillis, CPA, Finance Director

COUNTY COMMISSION:

Commissioner Mary Aiken

Commissioner Hannah M. "Nancy" Robinson

Commissioner Diane Rowden

Commissioner Robert Schenck

Commissioner Mary Whitehouse

George Roussos, P.E., Deputy County Administrator

George Zoettlein, Office of Management and Budget Director

SPRING HILL FIRE & RESCUE DISTRICT:

Chief Morrison

OTHER:

Chip Jones, KPMG

Hernando Today

St. Petersburg Times - Hernando Edition

WWJB Radio Station

Hernando County Public Library: Main Branch/Lykes Memorial

INTERNET USAGE REVIEW

HERNANDO COUNTY INTERNET USAGE POLICY

The Clerk of Circuit Court (CCC) and the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted the same Internet Usage Policy (*See the Internet Usage Policy at Exhibit 1.*). The Spring Hill Fire & Rescue District (SHFRD) adopted a very similar policy. (*See SHFRD's Policy at Exhibit 3.*) During fieldwork, a copy of the CCC's, the BCC's and the Hernando County Sheriff's Office's Internet usage policies were provided to SHFRD.

The Internet Usage Policy provides users with guidance of what is and is not acceptable Internet usage. Per the Policy, acceptable usage is to acquire and share government, technical, and other information. Furthermore, employees using the Internet for professional governmental purposes need to ensure that they do so in a proper, ethical and professional manner. The BCC's Code of Conduct states that, "Employees are prohibited from promoting or conducting personal or private business for gain or personal benefit within any County building or property or on County time." (*See the BCC's Code of Conduct at Exhibit 2.*)

Although personal use is discouraged it is not disallowed. Limited personal use that does not affect productivity, use excessive County resources, or creates a negative public perception is acceptable. The fire departments appear to have the most lenient interpretation of personal use in that the fire stations have computers set up for personnel that work 24 hour shifts.

Per management, all CCC, BCC and SHFRD employees who are authorized to access the Internet are required to sign a statement that they have read and understand the Internet Usage Policy and they agree to abide by the terms.

PURPOSE & SCOPE

This review was performed as a continuous-self monitoring tool designed to discourage employees from excessive personal use and accessing inappropriate sites, ensure that resources are used efficiently and are adequately protected, and address compliance with the CCC's, the BCC's and the SHFRD's Internet usage policies.

The scope of work consisted of testing a small sample of computer Internet access activity from September 2002 to March 7, 2003. The test sample included CCC, BCC and SHFRD computer activities. The scope of work was limited to only those computers whose network access is continuously monitored through automation. The Hernando County Fire Department and SHFRD were tested only for weapon and sexually explicit access. It should be noted that accessing weapon sites is not prohibited but taking into consideration the post September 11, 2001, environment, access to these sites should be discouraged. The testing was stopped when it was determined that overall, CCC, BCC and SHFRD employees require additional Internet Usage Policy awareness.

Audit Services (ASD) neither relied upon the list of computer custodians nor determined which employee used which computer at any specific time, therefore, the employee assigned to a computer may or may not be the Internet user. In addition, ASD did not draw conclusions as to whether users excessively abused access as access is based upon departmental needs. Internet usage is unique to the characteristics of the

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department. Therefore, it is ASD's intent to notify management that the potential for abuse exists. It is management's role to verify which employee used which computer at any specific time, assess and evaluate the necessity of usage, and to take corrective action as appropriate.

It is Audit Services' goal to monitor Internet usage on a periodic basis. This is the first of such reviews.

DISCUSSION POINT

The existing County's technology allows for the identification of potential abuse. Possible sexually--explicit Internet access was identified. The County Administrator and the SHFRD Chief were provided this information to evaluate whether this type of abuse occurred and to take the appropriate corrective action. In addition, the Clerk of Circuit Court, the County Administrator, and the SHFRD Chief were provided computer access logs to evaluate whether any of the sampled computers were used excessively to access the Internet and, if identified, to take appropriate corrective action.

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) denotes that employees who perform work will be compensated for the work performed. If a non-exempt employee utilizes his/her computer during lunch breaks and answers the phone, assists customers or co-workers, or performs any other job functions, this may be a violation of the FLSA which could result in potential County liability for compensation. The Government Center and the Libraries have public access computers available for public and employee personal use.

RECOMMENDATIONS & MANAGEMENT'S

Recommendation 1: Management should evaluate whether their employees spend too much time on the Internet for personal use. When evaluated, consideration should be given to the unique characteristics of the department, public perception, job function, loss of productivity, and the costs/benefits, for example, ancillary costs and intangible costs (i.e. retirement expenses, fringe benefits, operating equipment, computer hardware, and network resource limitations).

BCC's Management Response: Concur. Internet access is not a right granted to all employees, but rather is limited to those employees that require Internet access in the execution of their duties. Management has used the results of this audit to examine Internet usage on a small sample of the County's computers and determined that personal use has been generally limited and is not detrimental to County operations. Internet use has been discussed at management staff meetings to ensure that the County's policy is well understood and expectations are clearly defined. It will also be a topic of discussion at upcoming departmental staff meetings to ensure that all clearly understand the County's policy. Managers have been notified that reports on employee Internet usage are available upon request in cases where they suspect abuse of the County's Internet Usage Policy. Management expects follow-up audits of Internet usage to be conducted by department directors and managers to monitor the effectiveness of changes made following this audit.

CCC's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

SHFRD's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

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Recommendation 2: Employee access to potential sexually-explicit-sites should be addressed by management.

BCC's Management Response: Concur. Employees of the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners that accessed sexually-explicit sites will be disciplined. To limit access to potential sexually-explicit sites, Hernando County has purchased fifty software licenses for WEBSense, which effectively provides blocks to computers in the children's section of the library, the kiosk located in the Government Center, and other select public-view stations. Computers located in the law library will receive this software during the week of March 17, 2003. Wholesale blocks to sexually-explicit web sites on all county computers is not considered cost effective. Compliance with county policy will be achieved through computer blocks on select computers, periodic monitoring and disciplinary action as appropriate.

CCC's Management Response: Not applicable.

SHFRD's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response. SHFRD has a limited number of personal computers and will solicit recommendations from Technology Services on software to be purchased. We that through education, monitoring, and appropriate discipline any occurrences can be eliminated.

Recommendation 3: To provide a fair and objective self-monitoring environment, all computers' Internet activity should be tracked, to the extent that is feasible. The County should have sufficient licenses to monitor these activities. The automated continuous-monitoring control should be kept up-to-date to ensure accurate reporting. The access history (retention period) should be increased to ensure an adequate audit trail is maintained.

BCC's Management Response: Concur. The County has over 700 licenses, which allow for continuous monitoring and detailed tracking using the software, ELRON. This is an adequate number of licenses for monitoring purposes. The ELRON software setting for the access history (retention) period will be increased from 90 days to a more appropriate retention period to ensure that detailed records are available for an adequate audit trail. In addition, to ensure accuracy, the County is verifying computer work station numbers with departmental assignments and has established a procedure for periodic updates.

CCC's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

SHFRD's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response. We are in the process of connecting all of our facility's personal computers through the County's Internet connection to ensure this monitoring occurs.

Recommendation 4: If feasible, Technology Services should block access to sexually-explicit-sites. The Library and public access computers may require exception based on Federal, State, and/or grant mandated laws, rules and regulations.

BCC's Management Response: Concur. To limit access to potential sexually-explicit and other inappropriate sites, Hernando County has purchased 50 software licenses for WEBSense, which effectively provides blocks to computers in the children's section of the library, the kiosk located in the Government Center, and other select public view stations. Computers located in the law library will receive

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this software during the week of March 17, 2003. Wholesale blocks to sexually-explicit web sites on all county computers is not considered cost effective. Compliance with county policy will be achieved through computer blocks on select computers, periodic monitoring and disciplinary action as appropriate.

CCC's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

SHFRD's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

Recommendation 5: Management is the first line of defense against employee abuse; therefore, consideration should be given to implementing a review process that provides a means for supervisors to monitor employee Internet access.

BCC's Management Response: Concur. Managers have been notified of their responsibility to monitor employee Internet usage on a periodic basis. This may be achieved through a myriad of ways dependent on circumstances such as physical proximity of the employees, extent of supervision exercised, work products developed, etc. It is up to the manager to ascertain how best to monitor Internet usage. No formal review process is planned to be established. Managers have been notified that reports on employee Internet usage are available upon request in cases where they suspect abuse of the County's Internet policy.

CCC's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

SHFRD's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

Recommendation 6: To ensure that the spirit of the Internet Usage Policy is complied with, consideration should be given to reinforcing CCC, BCC and SHFRD management's and staff's knowledge and awareness of the Internet Usage Policy. In addition, the Policy should be emphasized during every new employee orientation.

BCC's Management Response: Concur. Hernando County is in the process of reinforcing knowledge and awareness of the Internet Usage Policy through departmental meetings with employees. In addition, the Internet Usage Policy is now a topic of discussion at every new employee orientation.

CCC's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

SHFRD's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

Recommendation 7: Consistent with the BCC's Personal Computers Policy (*Exhibit 4*), preventative controls and/or training should be enhanced to ensure that personal computers are used only by authorized personnel. Preventative controls include physical security of computers, such as screen-saver password protection, nonsharing of computers, safeguarding passwords, and input of password before network access is authorized. Passwords and computers should not be shared with anyone.

BCC's Management Response: Concur. Hernando County has reexamined the issue of preventative controls. All computers require the input of a password before network access is authorized. The use of screen-saver passwords has not been as widespread county-wide. Hernando County has now mandated

the use of screen- saver passwords with a maximum time delay for activation of five minutes. The importance of safeguarding passwords and not sharing computer cannot be over emphasized. This will be a topic of discussion at future new employee orientation sessions. The audit recommends the non-sharing of computers. There are instances where the sharing of computers makes sense from an operational and cost perspective (i.e. reference librarian use, library check-out work station, building inspectors). The County intends to continue shared use of computers where appropriate.

CCC's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

SHFRD's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response. Methods of increasing security such as individual passwords or screen-saver passwords will be discussed with Technology Services. Policies for computer use will be recommended to the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Recommendation 8: To limit potential violations of the FLSA, management should encourage nonexempt employees to limit the use of computers at workstations during lunch breaks. The Government Center and the Libraries have public-access computers available for public and employee personal use. Employees should be encouraged to utilize public-access computers.

BCC's Management Response: Concur. Non-exempt employees have been counseled to limit use of computers during lunch breaks. In addition, employees have been advised at departmental staff meetings about the availability of public-access computers.

CCC's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

SHFRD's Management Response: Concur with the BCC's response.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Other minor findings, not included in this report, have been communicated to management and/or corrected during the audit process. I thank the management and staff for their cooperation throughout the audit.

Management's response was provided by Karen Nicolai, Richard Radacky, and Chief Morrison.

Fieldwork was performed by:

Peggy Prentice, CIA, Audit Services Manager

This audit report was reviewed and authorized by Karen Nicolai, CPA, Clerk of Circuit Court, on March 25, 2003.

EXHIBIT 1
CCC AND BCC
INTERNET USAGE POLICY

PURPOSE:

The Internet and the World Wide Web networks provide a unique service for acquiring and sharing government, technical, and other information. Hernando County Board of County Commission employees using the Internet for professional governmental purposes need to ensure that they do so in a proper, ethical and professional manner.

The Hernando County Technology Services Department feels that the Internet and the Electronic Information Superhighway will be the future media for communication, both with government agencies and the public.

POLICY:

Employees who use Hernando County's access to the Internet and the World Wide Web must:

1. Not disclose or transmit County proprietary information, such as security specifics, software products or other public information via the Internet except when approved by authorized management.
2. Not download or upload material containing the following:
 - a. Derogatory racial content
 - b. Sexual content
 - c. Derogatory religious content
 - d. Political statements
 - e. Offensive language
 - f. Any content which would negatively reflect upon the County Government
 - g. Material prohibited by local or state law
3. Not use the Internet for personal gain or non-county approved solicitation.
4. Not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any computer or communications systems on the Internet.
5. Check any downloaded executable software using an approved virus package prior to that software being run on any County computer system.
6. Abide by the Hernando County Personal Computer Policies and Software Code of Ethics.
7. Abide by the decisions of the Internet administrator. This position is under the direction of the Technology Services Department Director.

Use of the Internet will be randomly monitored and violations will be handled under Personnel Policy Section 6, Personal Conduct. For violations of the Internet Policy penalties will be consistent with the offense as outlined in the Hernando County Personal Policies Manual and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

I have read and understand the Internet Usage Policy and agree to abide by the terms.

Employee Signature

Print/type Name

Date

Department Director Signature

Print/type Name

Date

Revision Date: May 10, 1996

EXHIBITS 2-4

WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST