

Internet Policy and Guidelines

Reviewed Date		Number	<i>TQ0105</i>
Revised Date		Approved Date	<i>July 12, 2000</i>

Introduction

The Internet is not a single network; rather it is a group of thousands of individual networks that have chosen to allow traffic to pass among them. The Internet can be used effectively to communicate and network with colleagues and to access information relevant to programming.

The health unit's system is designed so that all computers connected to the Barrie Office network can access the Internet.

Purpose

Legislative Authority

Policy Definitions and Interpretation

Policy

The health unit supports access to the Internet by all staff where necessary to conduct day to day business of the organization. This would include communicating with colleagues, suppliers and the public, and gathering information relevant to programming.

Employees will not use the network or Internet access for financial gain, for commercial activity or for any unauthorized or illegal activity. Users will not post, publish or display inappropriate material that includes but is not limited to materials that are profane, obscene, abusive, sexually explicit, defamatory or racist. Failure to comply with these statements will result in disciplinary action.

The use of the Internet is a privilege. This privilege can be revoked at any time and for abusive conduct including:

- Using abrasive or otherwise objectionable language in either public or private messages
- Sending messages that are likely to result in the loss of recipients' work or systems
- Sending chain letters or any other types of use which would cause congestion of networks or otherwise interfere with the work of others
- Transmitting or downloading information or software in violation of copyright laws

Procedures

Security and Confidentiality

If you are going to communicate via computer, please consider carefully whether you are willing to take the risk of third-party interception. While some experts say third-party interception is unlikely, others argue that encryption of sensitive information is a necessary precaution and the only way to ensure private communication. If the risk of third party interception is a concern, please consider communicating by telephone or in person.

Allowing access to the Internet via the agency network introduces some vulnerability to the system. The agency has established a firewall to prevent individuals from accessing confidential information from our network or from interfering with our internal systems. However, when information is downloaded from the Internet onto the network or local hard drives, the entire system may be exposed to viruses. The network has a security system designed to detect viruses. You can also reduce the chance that the system will be infected by ensuring the credibility of the information you are downloading to the system.

System Limitations

The Barrie Office network accesses the Internet through a data connection to a local Internet Service Provider. The more staff accessing the Internet via the health unit network at one time, the slower the connection will be. Therefore, it is critical that staff using the Internet know how to do so effectively.

Conducting Internet Searches

The Internet can act as a gateway to critical information and resources. The key is to know how to effectively use Internet tools and systems to navigate the Internet maze. It is also important to critically evaluate information accessed through the Internet to ensure the information is accurate and the source is credible.

Tips for Searching

- To speed up your searches, bookmark your favourite search tools for future use. Also, bookmark useful sites during your search, so that you can later find your way back to them. This technique also eliminates typing errors when the addresses or URLs are long and complicated. Bookmarks are referred to as Favourites when using Microsoft Internet Explorer.
- There are times when a search tool will not connect to a Web site for one of several reasons: you may have misspelled a word or erred in the address, not uncommon errors. A careful check will detect the mistake. You may have difficulty in accessing the site, because of the high activity there. At times, the search tool itself may be disabled or undergoing changes, and you will need to wait until it is operating again. The site has been discontinued, but not removed as a link.
- Search tools are constantly changing as they expand their scope and improve their performance. Use the Help Section of your frequently used search tools to remain current as their use.
- An extraordinary number of hits often result because the query directs the search to individual words rather than to related words as in a phrase or title. For example, if a query asks for American customs rather than "American customs", then the responses

will be for the words American and customs separately, in addition to the coupled words. Quote marks narrow the search by coupling related words. Other operators act similarly in limiting searches to the intended meaning.

- Because each search tool has its own method and criteria for indexing and supplying information, its database content and retrieval method will tend to be unique. Therefore, the responses to a particular query may vary greatly from search tool to search tool. For any one query, you will considerably improve your chances of finding the information you want by using several search tools.
- A search tool may provide different response at different times to the exact same query, since its database and retrieval criteria change frequently. Different responses occur more frequently in keyword searches than subject searches.
- During a search you will sometimes find long articles that you prefer not to read or print at the moment. You can defer action by selecting the text, copying it into Clipboard and then pasting it in a word processing window. Later you can read the articles and decide which parts, if any, you wish to keep for future references.
- Some Web sites may give you the option of eliminating graphics. For those with computers that are slow to download, you will speed up your search by using search tools that have minimal graphics. You can assess this factor by noting how long it takes to download the Home Page.
- Knowledge of how information is indexed can be helpful in selecting an appropriate search engine for a query. There are three methods used in the indexing of a Web site database.
- *Full text index*: A database index that is said to include all terms and URLs. In practice each search tool uses a filter to remove words it considers unnecessary.
- *Keyword Index*: A database index that is based on the location and frequency of words and phrases. However, if a name or term is mentioned only once or twice in the Web site, it may not be included in its index. Keyword indexing is the most used and fastest growing indexing method.
- *Person (Human Index)*: This index is created by individuals who review Web sites and select the most appropriate words and phrases to describe their content. It provides a directory that is high in relevance based on similar cataloguing methods used by libraries. Unlike the above two indexing methods, which employ robots, it has the value of being reviewed.
- When constructing a query, avoid using general terms except where modified by a specific one. Otherwise, you will get an enormous number of hits of little or no relevance. For example, roof alone is too broad, but "tile roof" as a phrase is acceptable.
- There are many ways of finding information of the Internet other than by the use of the WWW. These include WAIS, Archie, Veronica, Gopher and ftp, all of which preceded the WWW but have been largely overshadowed by it. For the beginner, it is better to master the Web first, so as not to dilute your efforts.
- The author of a publication starts out by creating a Web site and then submits the Web site to the Webmasters of both directories and search engines. Directory reviewers assess submittals for suitability, and if accepted, index their contents. Search engines

automatically spider all Web sites on the Internet, indexing new ones according to their particular guidelines. Both directories and search engines periodically update previous submittals, using their established procedures.

- There continues to be a huge proliferation of Web sites, because the Internet provides simple and cost-effective way to publish and attain world-wide exposure. Because search engines spider their input without review, the searcher needs to be careful about the validity, accuracy and authority of their references. Directories, which are reviewed, have some advantage in this respect. In any case, wherever you can, consider the reputation of the author, source of the information and date of publication.

Related Forms

Related Policies

Final Approval Signature: _____

Review/Revision History:

September 2010 Policy re-numbered, previous number C4.030