



Administrative Policies
And Procedures
Tennessee Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts

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Effective Date: 11/01/01

Supersedes: Administrative
Directive 97-2

Approved by: Chief Justice Frank F. Drowota, III and Cornelia A. Clark, Director

Subject: POLICY REGARDING THE USE OF STATE OWNED COMPUTERS AND
EQUIPMENT

- I. Authority: T.C.A. §§16-3-803 & 10-7-512
- II. Purpose: To establish guidelines for the appropriate use of State provided computer hardware, software, networks, and related services.
- III. Application: All employees (for purposes of these policies and procedures employees includes all contractors, part time employees, interns, and court clerk offices participating in the TnCIS project) of the judicial branch whom are provided computer hardware, software, networks, and related services.

IV. Definitions:

Assistant Director – refers to the Assistant Director of the Courts over Technology Services.

Unacceptable Use – Includes but is not limited to the following: private or personal profit activities, political campaign activities, vandalism or destruction of files and records, unauthorized not-for-profit activities, attempts to disrupt or subvert another user or users work, transmission or storage of threatening, obscene, pornographic, profane, sexually oriented or harassing materials, chat room usage that does not pertain directly to your job duties, violation of Copyright laws.

Computer Equipment – refers to desktops, laptops, file servers, hubs, modems, printers, etc.

Software – refers to word processing, spreadsheet, database tools, web browsers, e-mail, legal research tools, etc.

Networks – method of interconnecting several computers for the purpose of sharing data, resources, and/or file storage.

LAN - Local Area Network – a network that interconnects several computers and devices at a single locale such as a single building or office.

WAN - Wide Area Network – a large scale network that interconnects multiple Local Area Networks for sharing of data, resources, and/or file storage.

E-mail (electronic mail) – A service that provides for communications via typed messages and data sharing via file attachments.

Internet – A vast clustering of Wide Area Networks allowing for the sharing of information on a global scale.

OIR – State Office of Information Resources, a division of Finance and Administration responsible for the State's technology infrastructure.

V. Policy:

- A. All computer equipment, software, hardware options, networks and related services for use by court personnel supported by the Administrative Office of the Courts, will be provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Technology Services Division.
- B. Only software provided by the Technology Services Division is to be loaded on these systems. Due to the nature of software licensing agreements, most software is only licensed for a single computer. Existing software contracts allow for audits at any time. This requires that we closely monitor the software loaded on these systems.
- C. Only hardware options provided by the Technology Services Division are to be installed on these systems, and must be installed by a member of the Technology Services Division or an approved representative or vendor. This procedure is necessary due to the support needs on the volume of systems that we have installed and also because of state inventory requirements, vendor warranties and service agreements.
- D. All equipment provided is subject to the state inventory guidelines.
- E. LAN services are provided for business use only. Acceptable use of these services includes communications, file storage, printing, and any other activities that pertain directly to your job or to professional development..
- F. WAN services and Internet access are provided for business use only. Acceptable use of these services includes communications, access to

state data services, research, support activities, and any other activities that pertain directly to your job or professional development.

- G. E-mail services are provided for business communications use only. Users should exercise care when receiving e-mails not to run executable files sent as attachments unless they are absolutely sure as to the source of the message. E-mail attached files have become one of the most common means by which computer viruses are spread.
- H. Unacceptable use of LAN, WAN, and E-mail as defined in Section IV above is not appropriate and should never be performed on the provided equipment or services.
- I. All users need to be aware that Internet e-mail is not secure. Once an e-mail message has left our internal e-mail system it no longer has any protection. Extreme care should be exercised when using Internet e-mail for business purposes and that the contents of such e-mails do not contain any confidential or sensitive information. Users may be legally responsible under Tennessee Law and/or Federal Law for any damages resulting from the transmission of confidential or sensitive information by Internet e-mail.
- J. All files, records, e-mails, and other electronic files or documents stored on state owned equipment are subject to the Public Records Laws of the State of Tennessee. Users of state owned equipment have no expected right of privacy. Unless protected by statute, court rule, or court order, all such records are considered public and open for inspection.
- K. Users should not allow any unauthorized party to use his/her assigned equipment. Passwords are confidential and should not be shared. Both user IDs and passwords are ways we protect the systems and they are also used when investigating alleged abuse. Sharing passwords is risky as it could end up reflecting negatively upon the user.

VI. Procedures:

- A. All requests for computer equipment, software, hardware options, and services should be directed in writing to the Assistant Director. Decisions to supply equipment and software are based on numerous factors and the final decision lies with the Administrative Director of the Courts.
- B. The Assistant Director may authorize the use of other software on the equipment. Such authorization may be obtained by written request to the Assistant Director. Permission will be given in circumstances where the software to be installed is known not to cause any conflicts with provided software or equipment and the requesting party can demonstrate the existence of a legal license to install the software. The

AOC reserves the right to remove any software, whether approved or not, that is causing conflicts or problems with other software, hardware or networking services we provide.

- C. In the case of equipment provided to court clerks' offices, county purchased hardware options may be installed only after obtaining the written approval of the Assistant Director. Approval for installations does not imply that the AOC will assume responsibility for or guarantee compatibility. It is the county's responsibility to track any of their installed options and handle problems arising from the installation. The AOC reserves the right to remove any installed hardware options that are found to be causing a conflict or problem with any AOC provided software, hardware, or networking services. The county is also responsible for making sure any county owned options are removed from equipment being picked up for repair, return, or surplus.
- D. Users will assist the AOC in inventory of provided equipment when needed. Equipment should not be moved without notifying the AOC Technology Services division prior to any action. Equipment may only be reassigned to another user or facility by the AOC.
- E. In the event of suspected abuse by a user, the user's supervisor shall have the right to request an investigation into the suspected abuse. Such request must be made in writing to the Assistant Director. The Administrative Director of the Courts will be made aware of any such request. Investigations can include but are not limited to inspection of files on workstations and file servers, review of e-mails sent and received, active monitoring of the users Internet and network use, and active monitoring of the users workstation. Initial investigations will be conducted by the Assistant Director. All investigations will be kept confidential until a finding is reached. Once a finding is reached both the requesting party and the Administrative Director will be informed of the results. In the case of discovery of potentially illegal activities the OIR Security Investigative team may be called in at the Administrative Director's request.
- F. In cases of proven abuse or misuse of state provided hardware, software, and networking services action will be taken to stop such activity. Action may include but is not limited to removal of e-mail services, removal of Internet services, suspension of access to computers and networks, suspension of employment, termination of employment, or recommendation for prosecution. The level of action taken will be at the discretion of the Administrative Director of the Courts in consultation with the party requesting the investigation, within the bounds of the law.
- G. Under this policy, the Administrative Office of the Courts has the right to audit software usage, inspect equipment and monitor network and Internet activity to verify compliance with this policy and to investigate

non-compliance. Also note that the State of Tennessee Office of Information Resources has the right to monitor and log all network and Internet traffic on the Wide Area Network. Under this policy and in accordance with the State's policy, users have no reasonable expectation of privacy in the use of these resources.

- H. All users of computer hardware, software, networks, or related services provided by the AOC must sign one of the attached acknowledgment forms.
- I. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Assistant Director.

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Administrative Directive 1.03

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have read and understand Administrative Directive 1.03. By signing I agree to follow all of the policies and procedures described in said directive. I also acknowledge my understanding that any infractions on my part may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, removal of e-mail services, removal of Internet services, suspension of access to computers and networks, suspension of employment, termination of employment, or recommendation for prosecution. I also acknowledge that I fully understand that I have no expected right of privacy in the use of state provided computer equipment, software, networks, or related services and that my use of same is subject to monitoring by the appropriate authorities as defined in the policies and procedures.

Employee or Consultant Name (Print):

Employee or Consultant Signature:

Date: _____

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Administrative Directive 1.03

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have read and understand Administrative Directive 1.03. By signing I agree to follow all of the policies and procedures described in said directive. As an elected or appointed court clerk, I acknowledge my understanding that I bear responsibility for seeing to it that all of my staff are informed of this directive and agree to follow the policies and procedures described therein. I will assist the Administrative Office of the Courts in enforcement of the directive as it applies to my staff. I also acknowledge my understanding that any infractions on my part may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, removal of e-mail services, removal of Internet services, suspension of access to computers and networks, suspension of employment, termination of employment, or recommendation for prosecution. I also acknowledge that I fully understand that I have no expected right of privacy in the use of state provided computer equipment, software, networks, or related services and that my use of same is subject to monitoring by the appropriate authorities as defined in the policies and procedures.

Clerk or Clerk & Master Name (Print):

Clerk or Clerk & Master Signature:

Date: _____