

 <p>Administrative Policies And Procedures Tennessee Supreme Court Administrative Office of the Courts</p>	Index #: 1.03	Page 1 of 8
	Effective Date: 06/03/2024	
	Revised: 11/01/01; 03/01/15	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>AK</i> <i>ML</i></p> <p>Approved by: Chief Justice Holly Kirby and Director Michelle J. Long</p>		
Subject: Policy Regarding the Acceptable Use of Computers and Equipment		

I. Authority: T.C.A. §§ 10-7-504, 10-7-512, 16-3-803, 16-3-805, & 17-1-304

II. Definitions:

“Authorized Personal Use” is an authorized user’s incidental use of computer and/or communications resources for personal reasons. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following: scheduling medical appointments or car/home repairs; short personal emails with relatives, friends, or colleagues; occasional personal business transactions; or using the Internet for professional development purposes.

“Acceptable Use” means communications, access to state data services, research, support activities, and any other activities that pertain directly to a user’s job or professional development.

“Computer Equipment” includes desktops, laptops, tablets, mobile devices, servers, hubs, modems, printers, etc.

“CTO” is the Chief Technology Officer of the Courts who leads and directs the Information Technology Services Division (“ITSD”).

“Email” or “Electronic mail” refers to the electronic transfer of information typically in the form of electronic messages, memoranda, and attached documents from a sending party to one or more receiving parties via an intermediate telecommunications system. Stated differently, email is a means of sending messages between computers using a computer network. Email messages shall be considered primarily as a medium of communication and not a repository of records.

“Internet” is a vast clustering of Wide Area Networks allowing for the sharing of information on a global scale.

“Information Technology Services Division” (“ITSD”) is a division of the Administrative Office of the Courts (“AOC”).

Subject: Policy Regarding the Use of State-Owned Computers and Equipment	Index #: 1.03	Page 2 of 8
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“Judge” is any state justice, state judge, or county judge who serves in a full-time or part-time status, including senior, special, and retired judges who are designated by the Chief Justice or as otherwise provided by law.

“Judicial Staff” is any person who works for a judge in a full-time or part-time status.

“Local Area Network” (“LAN”) is a network that interconnects several computers and devices at a single locale such as a single building or office.

“Network(s)” is a method of interconnecting several computers for the purpose of sharing data, resources, and/or file storage.

“Password” means a string of characters (letters, numbers, and/or other symbols used to authenticate an identity of a user).

“Software” means word processing, spreadsheet, database tools, web browsers, email, legal research tools, or other related programs used to operate computers.

“Strategic Technology Solutions” (“STS”) is a division of Finance and Administration responsible for the State's technology infrastructure.

“Unacceptable Use” means an authorized or unauthorized user’s improper use of computer and communications resources, including but are 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 the user’s job duties; or violation of copyright laws (which does not include fair use).

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

III. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the standards and guidelines for the acceptable use of computer equipment and/or technology resources, regardless of location. This policy also includes, but is not limited to, the following: networks, computer equipment, software, whether owned, leased, or otherwise provided by the AOC, data, technical knowledge, and expertise.

IV. Application:

This policy applies to all users who have been provided access rights to ITSD resources, an AOC email (i.e., an email address that ends in @tncourts.gov), and/or internet via agency issued network or system User ID's.

V. Policy:

- a. ITSD will provide all computer equipment, software, hardware, network and related services for State employees supported by the AOC. For county employees supported by the AOC, ITSD will provide server hardware, network, and related services for court use. The Court Clerk will provide all ITSD approved computer equipment and software for use by county court personnel. Non ITSD approved equipment will not be allowed or supported.
- b. Only ITSD approved software is permitted to be loaded on these systems and must be installed by a member of ITSD or an approved representative or vendor. Most software is only licensed for a single computer per typical software licensing agreements, and software contracts allow for audits at any time. Unauthorized software is subject to immediate removal and potential disciplinary action.
- c. All workstations will have locked screen savers enabled after ten (10) minutes of inactivity, which requires a password to unlock. In addition, all users should lock their workstation manually when stepping away from their work area.
- d. Password Requirement: All workstations will be password protected using a password that meets the minimum requirements referenced in the Password Policy.
- e. Departing judges and their judicial staff who retire or leave office, but are concluding pending casework as allowed by statute and approved by the AOC, shall return all assigned computer equipment no more than sixty (60) days after leaving office or retirement date on file with human resources.
- f. WAN services including Internet access are provided for business use and authorized personal 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 a user's job or professional development.
- g. Judges and/or judicial staff with an ITSD provided email address (i.e., an email address that ends in @tncourts.gov) or county provided email address, should utilize that email address to conduct court business. The AOC and ITSD will not, absent exigent circumstances, communicate with or support a judge or judicial staff who uses a non-governmental email

addresses (i.e. gmail, Yahoo, and Hotmail).

- h. Email services are provided for business communications and authorized personal use only. Regarding email attachments, users should take caution with any attachments unless they are absolutely sure of the source of the message. Email attached files have become one of the most common ways computer viruses are spread.
- i. Unacceptable use of LAN, WAN, and/or email is not appropriate and should never be performed while using computer equipment or services. 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 to 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, peripheral options, and services shall be directed to the CTO via the ITSD Help Desk. The preferred method to submit a request is through the JIRA Help Desk Ticket System.
- b. If the equipment or software is not typically offered by ITSD, the CTO will review the request and may approve. The AOC Director will make the final decision regarding procurement of unique or non-standard equipment and software.
- c. The CTO may authorize the use of non-standard software on the equipment. Such authorization may be obtained by written request to ITSD or the CTO. Permission will be given in circumstances where the requested software 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. ITSD reserves the right to remove any software, whether approved or not, that is causing conflicts or problems with other software, hardware or networking services provided by ITSD.
- d. In the case of equipment provided to a county court clerks' office, county purchased hardware options may only be installed after obtaining the written approval of the CTO or Manager of ITSD Help Desk. Approval for installations does not mean that ITSD will assume responsibility for the hardware or guarantee compatibility. It is the county's responsibility to track any of their installed options and

handle problems arising from the installation. ITSD reserves the right to remove any installed hardware options that are found to be causing a conflict or problem with any ITSD provided software, hardware, or networking services, including system upgrades. The county is also responsible for removing any county owned options from equipment picked up for repair, return, or surplus.

- e. All ITSD provided equipment is subject to the State inventory guidelines. Users will assist the AOC in inventory of provided equipment when needed. Equipment should not be moved without prior notification to ITSD. Only ITSD may reassign ITSD provided equipment to another user or facility.
- f. 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 requests must be made in writing to the AOC Director or the CTO. If not notified directly, the AOC Director will be made aware of any such request. Investigations may include, but are not limited to, inspection of files on workstations and file servers, review of emails sent and received, active monitoring of the users Internet and network use, and active monitoring of the user's workstation. Initial investigations will be conducted by the CTO. All investigations will be kept confidential until a finding is reached. Once a finding is reached, both the requesting party and the AOC Director will be informed of the results. In the case of discovery of potentially illegal activities, the STS Security Investigative Team may be called in at the AOC Director's request.
- g. In cases of proven abuse or misuse, ITSD will take actions to stop such activity. Actions may include, but are not limited to, removal of email 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 AOC Director in consultation with the party requesting the investigation.
- h. The AOC 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. In conjunction with STS, the AOC has the right to monitor and log all network and Internet traffic on the WAN and audit software usage. Under this policy and in accordance with the State's policy, users have no reasonable expectation of privacy in the use of these resources.

- i. Users should exercise extreme care when using Internet email for business purposes. Users should be cautious while sending out confidential information contained within an email. 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 email.
- j. All files, records, emails, and other electronic files or documents stored on computer equipment and/or services provided by ITSD may be subject to the Public Records Laws of the State of Tennessee. Users of computer equipment that make use of services provided by ITSD have no expected right of privacy. Unless protected by statute, court rule, or court order, all such records may be considered public and open for inspection.
- k. All users of computer equipment, software, networks, or related services provided by the AOC must sign one of the attached acknowledgment forms.
- l. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the CTO.

Subject: Policy Regarding the Use of State-Owned Computers and Equipment	Index #: 1.03	Page 7 of 8
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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 email 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 computer equipment, software, networks, or related ITSD 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: _____

Subject: Policy Regarding the Use of State-Owned Computers and Equipment	Index #: 1.03	Page 8 of 8
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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 email 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 computer equipment, software, networks, or ITSD related services and that my use of same is subject to monitoring by the appropriate authorities as defined in the policies and procedures.

Appointed or Elected Clerk Name (Print):

Appointed or Elected Clerk Signature:

Date: _____