

COUNCIL POLICY



Policy name	Information Technology Usage
--------------------	------------------------------

Abstract
To govern and make users aware of the requirements in using the information technology facilities and services made available by Council.

Dates	Policy or amendment approved	19 Mar 2014
	Policy or amendment takes effect	19 Mar 2014
	Policy is due for review (up to 4 years)	31 Aug 2016
Endorsed by	Policy Working Group	
Approved by	Gunnedah Shire Council at its Ordinary Meeting of Council held 15 Aug 2012 Resolution number: 29	
Policy Custodian	Manager Information Services	
Relevant to	All persons using information technology facilities provided by Council, including staff and elected members	
Superseded Policies	Information Technology Usage 2007	
Related Documents	Policy Framework Internet Access for Public Use Code of Conduct	
Related Legislation	Local Government Act 1993	
File Number	634399	

Contents

1. Purpose
2. Scope
3. Definitions
4. Policy principles
5. Policy statement
6. Accountability, roles and responsibilities
7. Acknowledgements
8. Version control and change history

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure that Council's investment in information technology hardware, software and services is used in the most productive and appropriate manner for the benefit of Gunnedah Shire Council and its community.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Gunnedah Shire Council employees, Councillors, volunteers, temporary or casual employees and other authorised personnel offered access to Council's Information Technology resources and are defined as an Authorised User

This policy is mainly concerned with the following Information Technology devices. The principles contained in this policy, however, are equally applicable to any other Information Technology device provided by Council for business use.

- Computer
- Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)
- Phones and portable access devices
- Network switch/hub
- Two Way Radio/Wireless links
- Internet connection
- Electronic Messaging (Including E-mail, voicemail & video conferencing, SMS)
- Further devices that allow connection to computer networks

3. Definitions

Information Technology Devices/System - Gunnedah Shire Council Information Technology device/systems comprises terminals, computers, PDA, phones, portable access devices, voice mail, two way radios, video conferencing, networks, and other ancillary equipment or software owned or operated on Gunnedah Shire Council's Information Technology Network or a Standalone Information Technology System used for Gunnedah Council's business activity.

Authorised User - A System User is a Gunnedah Shire Council staff member (Full time/Part time/Temporary), Councillor, Contractor or Volunteer who uses or has access to Gunnedah Shire Council's Information Technology Devices/System as defined.

Email and Messaging - Email means the Gunnedah Shire Council provided electronic mail systems/ computer accounts and phone systems. Additional messaging facilities may include but are not limited to calendar and scheduling programs, chat sessions, short message service (SMS), newsgroups and electronic conferences.

Personal information - Information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database) that is recorded in any form and whether true or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.

Internet Download (Download) – To transfer a file or files from another computer to the computer you are using. - for example, from a internet server to your desktop/laptop computer.

There are a few methods of downloading files on the internet:

- HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP)
- File Transfer Protocol (FTP)

This download definition for the purpose of this policy excludes the normal method of browser operation where web page information is automatically downloaded from the host server.

Browsing - Using a client program (software), typically a web browser to look at various kinds of Internet resources. The browser has the functions to view, download, upload, surf or otherwise access documents (for example, Web pages) on the internet

Firefox and Internet Explorer are well-known "Web browsers" that enable you to view and interact with Web sites.

Browsing is the process of moving through a web site or surfing the Net," using a world wide web browser and clicking on a variety of hyperlinks. Derived from the notion of "browsing" through a store, the term implies you are "just looking," but in fact, you are interacting.

Surfing - To browse or look at information on the Web by pointing and clicking and navigating in a non linear way (meaning you can go to any site at any time you like).

4. Policy principles

4.1 All users of Gunnedah Shire Council information technology devices should read this policy carefully as they will, in future, be deemed to be aware of its contents in the event that there is any breach of this policy.

4.2 This policy is intended to provide for the operation, management and security of, and access to, information technology facilities supplied by Gunnedah Shire Council. The policy applies to all such equipment owned by the Council and to any such equipment used in the name of the Gunnedah Shire Council. It also applies to any privately-owned computing equipment that is connected to Council's networks. The Council provides information technology equipment for the administrative, research and business purposes for authorised users of Gunnedah Shire Council, and it is expected that such equipment will be used responsibly and appropriately. This policy is intended to protect the Council internally, and in the public domain, from illegal or improper use of such facilities. Council must ensure that access and security are provided for and that authorised users rights are safeguarded. Provision has been provided for definitions of misconduct and for redress which may be made should transgressions occur.

5. Policy statement

5.1 General Provisions

Information Technology devices such as the Computer, PAD, Internet, telephones and two way radios are public resources and provided to authorised users to be used for legitimate business purposes.

All E-mail accounts including the data and messages contained within or transmitted via them are the property of Council and are intended for business use only. Authorised users are advised that they do not have any personal or proprietary rights over communication devices or E-mail accounts.

Authorised users should only transmit any classified, staff in confidence, commercial in confidence, restricted or sensitive material over any of Council's Information Technology devices to facilitate Council's business requirements.

Authorised users must safeguard Council's information and information belonging to others such as Council customers and suppliers from unauthorised or accidental disclosure, modification, damage or destruction, consistent with Council policies and procedures.

The permitted use of Council's Information Technology devices must be consistent with other relevant laws, policies and practices regulating:

- Copyright breaches and patent materials legislation
- Anti-discrimination legislation
- Privacy legislation
- Council's Policies
- Council's 'Code of Conduct'

- Council's 'Internet Access – Public Use'
- Local Government act
- Practices regulating discriminatory speech and the distribution of illicit and offensive materials, particularly those that are sexual or pornographic in nature.

Failure to comply with this policy will lead to disciplinary action, should any authorised user's conduct and / or actions be unlawful or illegal they may be personally liable. Council reserves the right to control and monitor the use of its equipment / services and audit and remove any illegal material from its communication devices without notice.

5.2 Use of Internet

Internet access is a service provided for business purposes.

It is inappropriate to:

- Intentionally down load unauthorised software
- Download files containing picture images, video pictures or graphics for personal use
- Download computer games, music files or accessing web radio, Video or TV sites.
- Visit inappropriate Web sites including chat lines / rooms, on-line gambling, on-line gaming, sexually explicit or pornographic material.
- Use third party e-mail systems (Excluding Council's IT Department staff)
- Use system intended to stealth usage from Council's monitoring systems to minimise detection.

Authorised Users Responsibilities:

The information of any organisation is one of its most valuable assets. Because Council's business is conducted extensively on information technology system and the information is available more readily and to greater numbers of persons, you have an important responsibility to safeguard it. Meeting that responsibility may be as simple as making good practices part of your regular routine.

Authorised User are expected to:

- a) Log off or lock your computer when you leave your desk for a lengthy time (more than 10mins). Keep information displayed on your screen confidential, just as you would keep confidential printed material on your desk or in your files away from wandering glances.
- b) Never write passwords or security information down.

- c) Ensure that organisational data is stored on network drives as allocated by the IT department. No organisational data should be stored on any local system drives or devices except to serve as a working/draft version.
- d) Apply security safeguards to protect devices and data taken off Council's premises. Special precautions are necessary for small portable devices (such as laptops and PDAs), which can be easily lost or stolen. Home computers used for Council's business should be secured.
- f) Retention, protection and filing practices and techniques for all files and records is governed by the State Records Act (1998). Users should make themselves aware of their responsibilities with this Act.

5.3 Use of Email

Email (external / internal) forms part of the official business tools used by Gunnedah Shire Council, as such e-mail is governed by the same legislative requirements (State Records Act 1998, FOI Act, Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998, NSW Public Sector Code of Conduct) as all records. Authorised users given E-mail access are responsible for registering to Council's Records Department all relevant business E-mails received or sent.

E-mail sent or received containing business activities can function as evidence of business transactions in a court of law; they are subject to legal processes such as discovery and subpoena. The records may also be required by Royal Commissions, auditors and other people / bodies to whom they may be subject. Transactions that provide evidence of business activities and are required for ongoing business should be documented in the Council's records management system – Dataworks, (or official records system at the time) to provide an official Council record.

Some E-mail messages may not be regarded as records because they have not participated in a business transaction, consequently they are not required to function as evidence of business. These E-mail messages that do not have a business context are generally of short-term value ie. Information only or messages, and does not require capturing and registration into Dataworks (or official records system at the time).

In addition to inappropriate usage restrictions for Information Technology devices mentioned above, E-mail is not to be used for: (Applicable to external & internal systems).

- Sending or distributing 'junk mail', 'chain' letters, 'hoax' mail or for other mischievous purposes (spam).
- Using E-mail to solicit outside business ventures for personal gain.
- Using E-mail to distribute software which is inconsistent with any vendor's licence agreement.
- Using language that may be offensive to another user eg. profanity and obscenities.

- Unauthorised accessing of data or attempt to breach any security measures on the system, attempting to intercept any data transmissions without authorisation.
- Sending E-mail messages of a defamatory nature.
- The distribution of information via E-mail (excluding business or personal messages eg. birthday, baby birth or social club details) such as Trade Union or Community Group material must be authorised by the General Manager.
- Sending of offensive messages or images including defamatory, discriminatory or pornographic material.

5.4 Personal Use

Reasonable personal use of Gunnedah Shire Council's Information Technology devices is permissible; however such equipment must always primarily be used for business purposes. Personal use is a privilege; its use must be appropriate, lawful, efficient, proper and ethical.

Council recognises that:

- Authorised users are also private citizens with individual personal needs and obligations.
- Authorised users may need to make use of Gunnedah Shire Council Information Technology devices for limited personal purposes. This usage must first be approved by the employees supervisor or in the case of Councillors the General Manger or Mayor
- There is a reasonable limit to which Council's Information Technology devices may be used for personal purposes, such usage to occur outside normal work times.
- Every authorised user has a responsibility to be productive in the use of their work time.

Personal use:

- Should be infrequent and brief, where personal use will be outside normal working times or during meals breaks.
- Should not involve activities that might be questionable, controversial or offensive, including gambling, accessing chat lines / rooms, transmitting inappropriate jokes or sending junk programs / mail.
- Personal use does NOT extend to sending non-business related written material to any political organisation.
- Must not disrupt Gunnedah Shire Council Information Technology systems
- Should not interfere with the employees job responsibilities or detrimentally affect the job responsibilities of other employees.
- Personal use of Council Information Technology devices is NOT to be considered private, authorised users using such devices do not have the same personal privacy rights as they would have when using private / public communication devices.
- Authorised users reasonably suspected of abusing personal use requirements will be asked to explain such use.

- Internet usage should be limited to “web browsing” only, it is NOT permitted to download any file types.
- Abuse of this privilege will result in disciplinary action.

5.5 Inappropriate Use

The use of Council's Information Technology system to make or send fraudulent, unlawful or abusive information, calls or messages is prohibited. Authorised users who receive any threatening, intimidating or harassing electronic messages should immediately report the incident to their supervisor or in the case of Councillors to the General Manager or Mayor. Any authorised users identified as the initiator of fraudulent, unlawful or abusive messages is subject to disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution.

Inappropriate use includes (but is not limited to):

- Use of Gunnedah Shire Council's Information Technology equipment to intentionally create, store, transmit, post, communicate or access any fraudulent or offensive information, data or material including pornographic or sexually explicit material, images, text or other offensive material.
- Use of Council equipment or services must NOT violate Federal or State regulations or legislation.
- Gambling activities
- Misrepresenting personal opinions as those of the organization

It is inappropriate to transmit, communicate or access any material, which discriminate against, harass or vilify colleagues or members of the public on the grounds of:

- Gender
- Pregnancy
- Age
- Race (nationality, descent or ethnic background)
- Religious background
- Marital status
- Physical impairment
- HIV status
- Sexual preference or transgender

5.6 Virus Protection

Virus infection of E-mail systems is becoming more prevalent, viruses are being sent over the Internet on a daily basis. The virus scanner installed on the Council's Information Technology devices should not be totally relied on as no scanning software can give 100% guaranteed protection. Unless file attachments (especially sent over the Internet) can be positively identified they should be totally deleted and NOT opened as they may contain viruses.

Notify the Gunnedah Shire Council IT Department if you receive questionable attachments or are unsure of what to do. Any opinions expressed in E-mail messages, where they are not business related, should be specifically noted as personal opinion and not those of the Council.

5.7 Security and Confidentiality

Authorised users should be alert to the fact that sensitive or personal information conveyed through Council's Information Technology devices cannot be guaranteed as completely private. The potential exists for sensitive information to be read, intercepted, misdirected, traced or recorded by unauthorised persons unless it has been encoded or encrypted. Such practices are normally illegal, but there can be no expectation of privacy. E-mail systems should not be assumed to be secure, information or personal data requiring privacy should not be stored in this way.

Username/Passwords or any security protection methods such as pins, private keys or similar methods must be kept confidential and not communicated with others verbally or in writing (IT Administration staff excluded). The integrity of the systems must be respected, this requires that users of systems will not divulge passwords and they will not exploit sessions left open or otherwise misappropriate or steal the "identity" of another user. Information regarding access to Council's Information Technology systems should be considered as confidential information and not be divulged without authorisation.

It is the responsibility of the user to report any suspected security issues to Council's Manager Information Technology within a practical time frame. Users are expected to treat electronic information with the care and all such information should be kept secure and used only for the purpose intended.

5.8 Monitoring and Breaches

All Gunnedah Shire Council's Information Technology resources, are provided solely for legitimate business purposes, personal use is permitted only within the limitations as described. Council may monitor, copy, access and disclose any information or files that are stored, processed or transmitted using Council's equipment and services.

Such monitoring will be used for legitimate purposes only (such as legal discovery) and in accordance with any relevant privacy legislation and/or guidelines or to ensure this policy is not breached

Gunnedah Shire Council's IT Department will undertake periodic monitoring, auditing and activities to ensure authorised user's compliance with the acceptable usage of devices in reference to this policy.

Authorised users who violate any copyright or license agreements are acting outside the scope of their employment terms and roles respectively, and will be personally responsible for such infringements. Authorised users who violate this policy will be subject to Council's disciplinary process and polices.

For staff, this may be any combination of:

- Informal warning;
- Denial of internet access for a period;
- Denial of internet access permanently;
- Disciplinary action, potentially for gross misconduct, through normal disciplinary process;
- Provision of information to the police for possible criminal proceedings;
- Any offence associated with pornography or substantially offensive behaviour will be automatically classified as being of a serious nature with progression to the final step in Council's disciplinary process.

6. Accountability, roles and responsibilities

6.1 Policy Custodian

Director Community and Corporate Services

6.2 Responsible Officer

Manager Information Services

7. Acknowledgements

7.1 Nil

8. Version control and change history

Date	Version	Approved by & resolution no.	Amendment
15 Aug 2007	For revision	38.2	
23 July 2012	Draft	Policy Working Group	For consideration by Council at August Ordinary Meeting

COUNCIL POLICY



CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY USAGE INDUCTION

TRAINER	
COURSE	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY USAGE INDUCTION
DATE	
NAME	
SIGNATURE	