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Authority: [MinnState Board Policy 5.13](#)
Custodian of Policy: Associate Vice President of Technology,
Research, and Planning

IMPLEMENTATION

Definitions of Terms Used in this Document

Information technology (IT): devices that enable access to the Internet

User: any person using any IT equipment or service, either locally or remotely

Provision of Services: Hennepin Technical College (HTC) provides a variety of electronic tools such as telephones, cell phones, mobile and wireless devices, computers, facsimile machines, electronic mail (email) systems, Internet access and a browser for employees whose job performance would be enhanced by the technology. HTC faces the challenge of making maximum use of the benefits of such tools, meeting legal requirements for access to information, and providing adequate protection for proprietary information. This policy memorandum governs access to and the appropriate use of this technology at all times by HTC employees.

Employee access to and use of electronic tools such as email and the Internet is intended for business-related purposes. Limited and reasonable use of these tools for occasional employee personal purpose that does not result in any loss of any reasonable time or resources is permitted.

Implementation Procedure

Employee Responsibility: HTC employees are responsible for appropriate use of e-mail and Internet access. They are expected to adhere to the highest ethical standards when conducting college business and to follow the Code of Ethics and related State statutes applicable to HTC employees.

For example: Minn. Stat. §43A.38, Subd. 4 provides: “USE OF STATE PROPERTY.

(a) An employee shall not use or allow the use of state time, supplies, or state owned or leased property and equipment for the employee’s private interest or any other use not in the interest of the state except as provided by law.”

(b) An employee may use state time, property, or equipment to communicate electronically with other persons including, but not limited to, elected officials, the employer, or an exclusive bargaining representative under chapter 179A, provided the use, including the value of time spent, results in no incremental cost to the state or results in an incremental cost that is so small as to make accounting for it unreasonable or administratively impracticable.”

Minn. Stat. §43A.39, Subd. 2 provides: “NONCOMPLIANCE.

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Any employee who intentionally fails to comply with the provisions of Chapter 43A shall be subject to disciplinary action and action pursuant to Chapter 609.”

Administrators and supervisors are responsible for ensuring the appropriate use of all electronic tools, including email and Internet access through training, supervising, coaching, and taking disciplinary action when necessary. HTC is responsible for establishing internal policies regarding password management, encryption, data practices, monitoring access, records retention, and the like, and for communicating those policies to employees. HTC will ensure that administrators and supervisors know who can access what, using what technology, and under what conditions.

Appropriate use: HTC employees need to use good judgment in Internet access and e-mail use. They are expected to ensure that email messages are appropriate in both the types of email messages created and the tone and content of those messages. Employee use of email and the Internet must be able to withstand public scrutiny without embarrassment to HTC College or the State of Minnesota.

Examples of inappropriate use includes, but are not limited to:

- Illegal activities
- Wagering, betting, or selling
- Harassment and illegal discrimination
- Fund-raising for any purpose unless sanctioned by Hennepin Technical College
- Commercial activities, e.g., personal for-profit business activities
- Promotion of political or religious positions or activities
- Receipt, storage or transmission of offensive, racist, sexist, obscene or pornographic information
- Non-State employee use

The traditional communication rules of reasonableness, respect, courtesy, common sense, and legal requirements also apply to electronic communication. For example, actions that are considered illegal such as gambling and harassment are not up to the discretion of administrators or supervisors: these actions break the law whether the behavior is conducted on email or by another means of communications, and they may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Employees should be aware that they may receive inappropriate and unsolicited email messages. Any such messages should be reported immediately to the IT management and any other designated official within HTC.

While employees may make personal use of HTC technology such as email and Internet access, the amount of use during working hours is expected to be limited to incidental use or emergency situations. Excessive time spent on such personal activities during working hours will subject the employee to disciplinary action.

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Union Use: In the interest of maintaining effective labor-management relationships and efficient use of HTC time and resources, HTC email systems may be used by employee representatives of the union for certain union activities. Approved uses include posting of meeting notices, investigation and administration of grievances, contract interpretation questions, union election results, and notification of arbitration and unit determination decisions.

HTC owned property or services including the email system may not be used for political activities, fund-raising, campaigning for union office, union organizing activities, or solicitation of employees for union membership.

Union use of electronic communication technology is subject to the same conditions as employee use of such technology as set forth in this policy. This includes the conditions set forth in the section below entitled, "Monitoring."

Monitoring: Email systems and Internet access are HTC resources, and are intended to be used for HTC business and other HTC sanctioned activities. HTC reserves the right to monitor all use of email and HTC Internet resources.

Data that HTC maintains electronically is government data and, as such, is subject to classification and access under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13. Employees should understand that electronic data are not completely secure. For example, email messages can be altered by a recipient and re-transmitted as if from the original sender, or data can be illegally accessed. They should also understand that email messages and Internet transactions, including those they delete or erase from their own files, may be backed up or recorded and stored centrally. Data may be retrieved and viewed by someone else with proper authority at a later date. It is the user's responsibility to use care in communicating information not meant for public viewing.

(Example: This email and any attachments to it may be confidential and are intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. Any views or opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Hennepin Technical College. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must neither take any action based upon its contents, nor copy or show it to anyone.)

Because the email and Internet systems are not secure, employees should not send any data classified as not public (private or confidential data on individuals or nonpublic or protected nonpublic data not on individuals) over the email or Internet systems unless the data are encrypted or encoded.

Record Retention Schedules: Record retention schedules are the same regardless of the medium used to create or store the record. See Minn. Stat. §138.17. As a result, some email messages may be official records of HTC and must be retained in accordance with the HTC record retention schedule appropriate



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for the type, nature, and content of the record. Improper disposal may subject the employee and HTC to legal sanctions and other administrative or legal consequences.