



**North Carolina
Department of Environment
and Natural Resources**

P R O C E D U R E S

Section: Information Technology Services

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Subject: Use of the Internet to Disseminate Public Information

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State of North Carolina

Information Resource Management Commission

Policy and Guidelines on the Use of the Internet

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POSITION ON THE USE OF THE INTERNET TO DISSEMINATE PUBLIC INFORMATION

The integrated North Carolina Information Highway and Internet (the Internet) is designated by the Information Resource Management Commission (IRMC) as a primary medium for the distribution and sharing of unrestricted public information. The IRMC will establish technical standards for the presentation of information on the Internet by State organizations.

This information release policy for the State of North Carolina provides purpose, direction, and incentive for State agencies to publish and to disseminate information collected by those Agencies in forms readily accessible to users of the North Carolina Information Highway and of the Internet.

GUIDELINE 1: Information to be published in electronic form.

Information collected by State agencies for public dissemination or which is otherwise generally disseminated to the public should be made available to the public in electronic form. State agencies should actively seek to implement this policy as resources allow.

GUIDELINE 2: The form of electronic information to be used.

State information should be available for public access in all forms consistent with conventional Internet usage and which are reasonable considering the content of the information and the standards of the IRMC.

GUIDELINE 3: Who shall have access to the electronic information.

The primary target population are North Carolina citizens, governmental agencies, institutions, and corporations, but the Internet is a world-wide communications network and access is to be expected and welcomed from beyond the boundaries of the state.

GUIDELINE 4: Support for agencies disseminating information and for users of the information.

The General Assembly, and State agencies should commit resources to the realization of the goals of this policy. In particular the following resources should be funded: (1) Conversion of information to forms ready for network access, (2) computer and communications equipment to support public access to the information, (3) network connectivity for State agencies, (4) staff in State agencies to support users of the information, (5) a State network information center to assist State agencies in conversion, connectivity, and support.

POSITION ON THE USE OF THE INTERNET BY PUBLIC STAFFS

Public staffs in North Carolina are encouraged to use the Integrated North Carolina Information Highway and Internet (the Internet) to its fullest potential for the purposes of furthering their missions, providing effective services of the highest quality, discovering innovative and creative ways to use resources and improve services, and encouraging staff development. The Internet should be a primary method for the exchange of ideas and information by public staffs.

GUIDELINE 1: Establish access to the Internet.

Establishment of accounts, authorizations and connections to the Internet by public staffs through workstations, local area networks (LANs), the State wide area network (WAN), the North Carolina Information Highway (NCIH), or through dial-in methods must be done in accordance with approved IRMC policies, procedures and standards and implemented in accordance with approved State policies, procedures, and standards for accessing and using Internet services.

GUIDELINE 2: Allow and encourage use of the Internet to accomplish job responsibilities and further the public agency's mission.

The Internet provides access to a wide variety of information resources that can aid public staffs in doing their jobs. Examples of job-related use of the Internet by the State include: (a) accessing external databases and files to obtain reference information or to conduct research; (b) corresponding with constituents and providing document delivery; (c) exchanging working documents or drafts for comment; (d) disseminating newsletters, press releases, or other documents to large groups of people; (e) acquiring information and documents in electronic form; (f) delivering services to clients; and (g) reading electronic mail discussion groups on job-related topics.

GUIDELINE 3: Allow and encourage use of the Internet for professional contacts and career development.

The Internet allows public staff members more efficiently to pursue professional and career development goals. Examples of the use of the Internet for professional contacts and career development include: (a) communicating with peers; (b) communicating with fellow members of committees and professional organizations; (c) collaborating on issues and writing; (d) transferring the full text of manuals and documentation, or of self-teaching workbooks; (e) connecting to resources that provide information relating to career and education opportunities; and (f) reading electronic mail discussion groups on professional or future career development topics.

GUIDELINE 4: Allow and encourage staffs to attend training in electronic applications that use the Internet and to use work time to practice the skills learned in those sessions.

It is in the best interest of the State to have well-trained and efficient staffs. Members of public staffs need both initial and continuing training and active support in all public agencies of the State to ensure successful and effective utilization of valuable Internet resources.

GUIDELINE 5: Distribute guidelines for responsible network use to all staffs and encourage them to use their access to the Internet in a responsible and informed way.

Public staffs have an obligation to learn about network etiquette (netiquette), customs, and courtesies. Certain procedures and guidelines should be followed when using electronic mail communications, participating in electronic mail discussion groups, using remote computer services, and transferring files from other computers. Staffs also have an obligation to be aware of computer security and privacy concerns and to guard against computer viruses. Any training program developed for use of applications on the Internet should also include discussion of responsible network use.

Netiquette guidelines will be available from the North Carolina Network Information Center upon its implementation by the State Library in the second quarter of 1994-95.

ASSISTANCE

A copy of this and other IRMC documents are available on the Internet in the North Carolina State Government World Wide Web Server under Information Resource Management Commission (URL <http://www.sips.state.nc.us>). Questions or comments are welcome and may be addressed to:

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