



Policy #:	ITP-N020- Employee Usage Policy	Effective:	09/01/2010	Page #:	1 of 7
Subject:	Title – New – N020 - Computer and Internet Usage Policy				

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the acceptable use of computer equipment at Collin County. These rules are in place to protect the employee and Collin County. Inappropriate use exposes Collin County to risks including virus attacks, compromise of network systems, services, and legal issues.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to employees, contractors, consultants, temporaries, and other workers at Collin County including all personnel affiliated with third parties. This policy applies to all equipment that is owned or leased by Collin County.

3.0 REFERENCE

- Collin County Records Management Policy – March 2005
- Old Format – Current – C020 - Collin County Policies Regarding Microcomputer Systems and Internet Use – May 2005

4.0 BACKGROUND

Information Technology Department intention for publishing this policy is to not impose restrictions that are contrary to Collin County’s established culture of openness, trust and integrity. The Collin County Information Technology Department is committed to protecting the county, its employees, and our partners from illegal or damaging actions by individuals, either knowingly or unknowingly.

Effective security is a team effort involving the participation and support of every Collin County employee and affiliate who deals with information and/or information systems. It is the responsibility of every computer user to know these guidelines and to conduct their activities accordingly.

This policy was originally created on November eleventh two thousand and three and updated last on May twenty-sixth two thousand and five. The policy was created to give guidance to users on proper usage of County equipment and networks.

Revision #:	1.3	Supersedes:	Version 1.2	Date:	09/01/2010
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Policy #:	ITP-N020- Employee Usage Policy	Effective:	09/01/2010	Page #:	2 of 7
Subject:	Title – New – N020 - Computer and Internet Usage Policy				

5.0 POLICY

General Policy

It is the responsibility of the individual employee to read, understand, and abide by this and other policies in regards to the usage of Collin County Information Technology systems.

While Collin County Information Technology Department desires to provide a reasonable level of privacy, users should be aware that the data they create on Collin County systems remains the property of Collin County. Because the need to manage and protect the county's systems and network, Information Technology cannot guarantee the confidentiality of the information stored on any network device belonging to the county. Additionally, all county data may be subject to open records request including personal data that is stored on county systems.

For security and network maintenance purposes, authorized individuals within Collin County may monitor equipment, systems and network traffic at any time.

The use of Collin County automation systems including computers, fax machines, servers, databases and all forms of Internet/intranet access is for county business and for authorized purposes only.

The same standards of decorum, respect, and professionalism that guide us in the office environment apply to electronic communications with third parties. Important, confidential, and proprietary information is stored on county computer systems thus only county personnel are allowed access to the county's computer systems.

All computer information is considered confidential unless specific permission is granted to use it. Accessing or attempting to access confidential data is strictly prohibited. Confidential information should only be used for its intended purpose.

All information on user computers, shares, databases and other storage locations is considered county property. Deleting, altering or sharing confidential, proprietary or any other information upon termination is a violation of state law and will be investigated and prosecuted.

Users of the e-mail system are personally responsible, with guidance and training from the Records Management Officer and Information Technology staff, to manage e-mail messages as well as other electronic documents according to the county's retention policy and schedule. It is the responsibility of the sender of e-mail messages within the county's e-mail system and recipients of messages from outside the county to retain the messages for the approved retention period. Names of the sender, recipient, date/time of the message, as well as any attachments must be retained with the message.

Revision #:	1.3	Supersedes:	Version 1.2	Date:	09/01/2010
--------------------	-----	--------------------	-------------	--------------	------------

Policy #:	ITP-N020- Employee Usage Policy	Effective:	09/01/2010	Page #:	3 of 7
Subject:	Title – New – N020 - Computer and Internet Usage Policy				

Use of county computers, networks, and Internet access is a privilege and may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct carried out on such systems, including, but not limited to:

- a. Sending chain letters or participating in any way in the creation or transmission of unsolicited commercial e-mail ("spam") that is unrelated to legitimate county purposes;
- b. Engaging in private or personal business activities, including excessive use of instant messaging and chat rooms;
- c. Accessing networks, servers, drives, folders, or files to which the employee has not been granted access or authorization from someone with the right to make such a grant;
- d. Making unauthorized copies county data;
- e. Destroying, deleting, erasing, or concealing county data, or otherwise making files or data unavailable or inaccessible to the county or to other authorized users of county systems;
- f. Violating the laws and regulations of the United States or any other nation or any state, city, province, or other local jurisdiction in any way;
- g. Engaging in unlawful or malicious activities;
- h. Deliberately propagating any virus, worm, Trojan horse, trap-door program code, or other code or file designed to disrupt, disable, impair, or otherwise harm either the county's networks, systems, or those of any other individual or entity;
- i. Using abusive, profane, threatening, racist, sexist, or otherwise objectionable language in either public or private messages;
- j. Sending, receiving, or accessing pornographic materials;
- k. Causing congestion, disruption, disablement, alteration, or impairment of county networks or systems;
- l. Failing to log off any secure, controlled-access computer or other form of electronic data system to which you are assigned, if you leave such computer or system unattended;
- m. Defeating or attempting to defeat security restrictions on county systems and applications;
- n. Installing third party software, regardless if vendor supplied or personal on county systems without authorization from the Information Technology Department;
- o. Removing any Collin County computer systems off county premises unless authorized by the Collin County Information Technology department head and the proper paperwork is completed, *with the exception of mobile systems that are issued to employees to utilize outside the normal operating hours.*

Internet and Intranet

The Internet is to be used to further Collin County's mission, to provide effective service of the highest quality to the county's citizens and staff and to support other direct job-related purposes. Supervisors should work with employees to determine the

Revision #:	1.3	Supersedes:	Version 1.2	Date:	09/01/2010
--------------------	-----	--------------------	-------------	--------------	------------



Policy #:	ITP-N020- Employee Usage Policy	Effective:	09/01/2010	Page #:	4 of 7
Subject:	Title – New – N020 - Computer and Internet Usage Policy				

appropriateness of using the Internet for professional activities and career development. The various modes of Internet/intranet access are county resources and are provided as business tools to employees who may use them for research, professional development, and work-related communications. Limited personal use of Internet resources is a special exception to the general prohibition against the personal use of computer equipment and software.

Collin County systems are allowed to access the Internet only through county approved and secured Internet accounts. Employees are strictly accountable for the content of their Internet messages. Individuals shall in no way attempt to circumvent filters and other security measures restricting access to files, data or networks.

Brief and occasional personal use of the electronic mail system or the Internet is acceptable as long as it is not excessive or inappropriate, occurs during personal time (lunch or other breaks), and does not result in expense or harm to the county or otherwise violate this policy.

Use is defined as "excessive" if it interferes with normal job functions, responsiveness, or the ability to perform daily job activities. Electronic communication should not be used to solicit or sell products or services that are unrelated to the county business; distract, intimidate, or harass coworkers or third parties; or disrupt the workplace.

All information created, sent or received via e-mail, network, or other means of official communication is the property of Collin County. Employees should not have any expectation of privacy regarding such information. This includes all e-mail messages and electronic files. Collin County reserves the right to at any time and without notice access, read, monitor and copy all messages and files on county computer system as it deems necessary. When it believes necessary, Collin County may disclose text or images to law enforcement or other third parties without the employee's consent.

To minimize vulnerabilities on county computer systems, all downloaded files will be scanned with virus detection software before viewed or opened.

Employees may not use Collin County systems or network for any of the following:

- a. Downloading of any software without the prior approval of Collin County's Information Technology Department;
- b. Dissemination or printing of copyrighted materials, including articles and software, in violation of copyright laws;
- c. Operating a business, usurping business opportunities, soliciting money for personal gain, or searching for jobs outside Collin County;
- d. Offensive, harassing statements or language including disparagement of others based on their race, color, religion, national origin, veteran status, ancestry, disability, age, sex, or sexual orientation;
- e. Sending or soliciting sexually oriented messages or images;

Revision #:	1.3	Supersedes:	Version 1.2	Date:	09/01/2010
--------------------	-----	--------------------	-------------	--------------	------------

Policy #:	ITP-N020- Employee Usage Policy	Effective:	09/01/2010	Page #:	5 of 7
Subject:	Title – New – N020 - Computer and Internet Usage Policy				

- f. Visiting sites featuring pornography, terrorism, espionage, theft or drugs;
- g. Gambling or engaging in any other activity in violation of local, state or federal law;
- h. Unethical activities or content, or activities or content that could damage Collin County’s professional reputation;
- i. *Exceptions to the above conditions will apply to the departments that require full access to the Internet for job related reasons. A request to gain access to other Internet sites must be provided from the department head or elected official.*

The Collin County website is a useful tool that provides a means for departments to communicate and provide services to the citizens of our county. Departments have the opportunity to establish and maintain a department webpage within the county web site. Departments are responsible for ensuring that the content will be reviewed, approved and published to the production web site by the Information Technology Department.

Personal Electronic Equipment

Collin County prohibits the use or possession in the workplace of any type of camera phone, cell phone camera, digital camera, video camera, or other form of image- or voice-recording device without the management permission and of each person whose image and/or voice is recorded. Employees with such devices should avoid possessing them in the workplace unless expressly permitted by their management to do otherwise. This provision does not apply to designated county personnel who must use such devices in executing their duties of their positions.

Employees should not bring personal computers or data storage devices (such as floppy disks, CDs/DVDs, external hard drives, flash drives, iPods, or other data storage media) to the workplace or connect them to county electronic systems unless expressly permitted to do so by management. Any employee bringing a personal computing device, data storage device, or image-recording device onto county premises thereby gives permission to the county to inspect the personal computer, data storage device, or image-recording device at any time with personnel of the county's choosing and to analyze any files, other data, or data storage devices or media that may be within or connectable to the personal computer or image-recording device in question. Employees who do not wish such inspections to be done on their personal computers, data storage devices, or imaging devices should not bring such items into workplace.

Licenses

Collin County does not condone the illegal duplication of software or other copyrighted material.

Revision #:	1.3	Supersedes:	Version 1.2	Date:	09/01/2010
--------------------	-----	--------------------	-------------	--------------	------------



Policy #:	ITP-N020- Employee Usage Policy	Effective:	09/01/2010	Page #:	6 of 7
Subject:	Title – New – N020 - Computer and Internet Usage Policy				

Collin County purchases or licenses the use of computer software from a variety of outside companies. Collin County does not own the copyright to this software or its related documentation and unless authorized by the software developer does not have the right to reproduce it for use on more than one computer. With regard to the use on local area networks or on multiple machines, employees shall use software only in accordance with the license agreement.

County software license shall not be used for personal use on non-county computer equipment.

Software license purchased or received by employees for personal use is prohibited on Collin County equipment.

Collin County Information Technology Department is authorized to conduct random software license audits of its network and systems. Information Technology personnel shall install and/or relocate all computer equipment and software unless the employee is specifically authorized.

According to the U.S. Copyright Law, illegal reproduction of software can be subject to civil damages of as much as \$100,000 per work copied and criminal penalties including fines and imprisonment. County employees who make, acquire, or use unauthorized copies of software will be subject to the above law.

Express User Responsibilities

Computer users are responsible for the appropriate use of county computers and for taking reasonable precautions to secure the information and equipment entrusted to them. Employees are responsible for reporting inappropriate use of county computers and breaches of computer security and assisting in resolving such matters.

Any employee who learns of a violation of this policy should notify the appropriate Collin County elected official, department head, or the Information Technology Department.

Again, it is the responsibility of the individual employee to read, understand, and abide by this and other policies in regards to the usage of Collin County Information Technology systems.

6.0 PROCEDURES

N/A

Revision #:	1.3	Supersedes:	Version 1.2	Date:	09/01/2010
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Policy #:	ITP-N020- Employee Usage Policy	Effective:	09/01/2010	Page #:	7 of 7
Subject:	Title – New – N020 - Computer and Internet Usage Policy				

7.0 REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision #	Description of Change
11/11/2003	1.0	Initial creation
06/01/2004	1.1	Revised
05/26/2005	1.2	Revised
09/01/2010	1.3	Revised and updated

8.0 INQUIRIES

N/A

9.0 APPENDICES

Current – MicroComputer Systems and Internet Use Policy

Revision #:	1.3	Supersedes:	Version 1.2	Date:	09/01/2010
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