



## **E-Mail and Internet - Policy & Procedure**

### **Purpose**

This document sets out the Theatre's policy with regards to acceptable internet, e-mail and Information Technology (I.T.) usage.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees of the Theatre, and any other person using business I.T. resources (any computer provided by the Theatre for work use).

### **Introduction**

E-mail enables the company staff to communicate promptly and efficiently with colleagues internally within the Theatre and enables a prompt and efficient service from the Theatre to relevant contact points. E-mail can also be used to communicate with other individuals and the Theatre with whom the staff of the company interacts.

While E-mail brings many benefits to the Theatre in terms of its communications both internally and externally, it also brings risks to the Theatre particularly where employees use it outside of the company roles. It also brings risks where employees have more general access to the Internet. For that reason, it is necessary to have a code of practice which regulates its use and which sets down specific rules for the use of E-mail and Internet. Every employee has a responsibility to maintain the Company's image, to use these electronic resources in a productive manner and to avoid placing the Theatre at risk for legal liability based on their use.

### **Use of E-mail**

E-mail is a personal computerised and efficient communication system, which enables the sending, and receiving of messages between staff and between the Theatre and other parties. Documents and materials can be attached to E-mails. The E-mail can effectively by-pass typewritten documents, faxes and the need to post documents. There are however, risks attached to the sending of E-mails and some of these are:

Your message may go to persons other than the intended recipient and if the contents are confidential or commercially sensitive this could be damaging to the Theatre.

Employees are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of material on the IT network and should take particular care when dealing with confidential information.

E-mail messages can carry computer viruses, which are particularly dangerous to the Theatre's computer operations generally.

Letters, files and other documents attached to E-mails may belong to others and there may be copyright implications in sending or receiving them without permission.

E-mail is speedy and, as such, messages written in haste or written carelessly are sent instantly and without the opportunity to check or rephrase. This could give rise to legal liability

on the Theatre's part such as claims for defamation, etc.

An E-mail message may legally bind the Theatre contractually without the proper authority being obtained internally.

All personal data contained in E-mails may be accessible under Data Protection legislation and, furthermore, a substantial portion of E-mails to Government and other public bodies may be accessible under Freedom of Information legislation.

E-mails should be regarded as potentially public information, which carry a heightened risk of legal liability for the sender, the recipient and the Theatre for which they work.

#### Guidelines for E-mail use

- In order to avoid or reduce the risks inherent in the use of E-mail the following guidelines are in place and must be adhered to:
- Limited personal use of the electronic mail and Internet systems is permitted, but should not be excessive or interfere with business needs or normal operations.
- Confidential or commercially sensitive information should not be sent by E-mail. If in doubt please consult your manager.
- Great care should be taken when attaching documents, as the ease with which employees can download files from the Internet or cut and paste materials from electronic sources increases the risks of infringement of the rights of others particularly the intellectual property and other proprietary rights. Also, attaching documents may give rise to the release of information not intended hence the importance of vetting attachments. Again, if in doubt please consult your manager.
- Extra caution needs to be taken with E-mail messages in respect to disparaging remarks that may be contained therein. An E-mail should be regarded as a written formal letter, the recipients of which may be much wider than the sender intended, hence any defamatory or careless remarks can have very serious consequences, as can any indirect innuendo. Avoid the use of indecent, obscene, sexist, racist or other inappropriate remarks whether in written form, in cartoon form or otherwise.
- Do not subscribe to electronic services or other contracts on behalf of the Theatre unless you have the express authority to do so. Authority for subscriptions including electronic subscriptions rests with your manager and unless you are one of those delegated persons you have no authority to enter into any binding commitment on the company via the E-mail or the Internet.
- If you receive any offensive, unpleasant, harassing or intimidating messages via E-mail you are requested to inform your manager immediately. It is important that we trace such E-mails as quickly as possible.
- Any important or potentially contentious communication, which you have received through E-mail, should be printed and a hard copy kept (e.g. confirmation of order etc.)
- Documents prepared by the Theatre for clients may be attached via E-mail. However, excerpts from reports other than our own publications may be in breach of copyright and the author's consent ought to be obtained particularly where, taken out of its original context. Information received from a client should not be released to another client without prior consent of the original sender. If in doubt consult your manager.

- E-mail is the most common way to spread a computer virus. Do not open any attachment unless you know the sender and you know what the attachment is and whether it is work related.
- No material should be downloaded onto a computer without prior permission from your manager.
- The Theatre computers are not to be used to participate in any E-mail chain letters or joke lists.
- The electronic mail and Internet systems are company property. Additionally, all messages and attachments composed, sent or received on the internal electronic mail or Internet systems of the Theatre remain the property of the Theatre. They are not the private property of any employee, and employees should not consider any e-mail or Internet messages or material private or their personal possessions.
- The Theatre reserves and intends to exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all messages created, received or sent over the electronic mail system for any purpose.

## Use of the Internet

### Introduction

The Theatre has access to the Internet through our computers. Such access enables staff users to obtain information specific to their role within the Theatre and enables two-way communication with sites appropriate to that role. Many of the Internet activities are for recreational and private use and are unrelated to the Theatre business.

### Internet Guidelines

1. The Theatre's Internet connections are intended for activities that either support the Theatre's business or the professional development of employees. Web surfing unrelated to these activities should be limited and with a cautionary approach.
2. The Theatres computers are not to be used to participate in "Chat Rooms".
3. Internet usage can be monitored on a systematic basis by the Theatre.
4. To prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the system there will be no unauthorised downloading of any software.

### In Summary

The Internet and E-mail should not be used:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For personal gain or profit.</li> <li>• To represent yourself as someone else</li> <li>• To post or download messages that contain political views</li> <li>• To post or download messages that contain inappropriate, obscene, inflammatory, intimidating, harassing, defamatory, disruptive or otherwise offensive language and anything that will reflect poorly on the Company's name and professional reputation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To advertise or otherwise support unauthorised or illegal activities.</li> <li>• To provide lists or information about the Company Employees to others and / or to send classified information without approval.</li> <li>• To interfere with job responsibilities, this includes spending unreasonable and unwarranted time on the Internet or on E-mail activities.</li> <li>• For use in "Chat Rooms".</li> </ul>
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Internet Access is conditional on the following additional guidelines being observed:

- The access, downloading or sending of any indecent, obscene, pornographic, sexist, racist, defamatory or other inappropriate materials as well as the circulation of such materials will be a dismissible offence. This rule will be strictly enforced and is viewed as very serious with potential criminal liabilities arising therefrom. The Gardaí or other appropriate authority will be informed where appropriate.
- The Theatre has a web page and social media pages that should not be interfered with nor changed in any way without prior authorisation. Authorisation for any amendment or change to the Theatre's web pages rests exclusively with Management or any individual given the responsibility by the Management
- The Theatre staff should not use of public messaging systems on the Internet unless with specific written permission of Management; Public messaging systems include user groups, special interest forums and bulletin boards.

### Social Media

Social networking and social media are communication tools which can have significant impact on the Theatre and professional reputations. Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online.

### Personal usage of Social Media

You must not disclose the Theatre's name or details on your own personal social media platform unless agreed by Management. Your work e-mail address should not be used as your primary means of identification on your personal social media platform. The Theatre may impose the disciplinary process up to and including dismissal for posting inappropriate material on social networking sites in circumstances where the posts breach confidentiality, dignity at work, Anti-Bullying, Harassment or Sexual Harassment, internal policy or brings the Company into disrepute.

Respect your audience. Employees should refrain from engaging in the use of inappropriate slurs and personal insults referring to work colleagues, clients and/or the Theatre, as this may lead to disciplinary action.

### Using Social Media for work purposes

Any contact details or business information acquired and maintained on the Company's systems remain the property of the Theatre. This includes any uploaded information (including personal contacts) brought by an employee from a previous employment.

Where it is a requirement as part of your role to engage in social media, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Respect copyright, fair use and data protection.
2. Do not provide the Theatre's or another's confidential or other proprietary information and never discuss the Theatre's business performance or other sensitive matters publicly.
3. Do not cite or reference clients, partners or suppliers without their approval. When you do make a reference, link back to the source. Don't publish anything that might allow inferences to be drawn which could embarrass or damage any individual.
4. Refrain from the inappropriate use of ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace. Employees

should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.

5. Refrain from using the Theatre's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so.
6. Do not post material that could be deemed to be threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous or hostile towards an individual or entity.
7. Ensure that the content you are posting is accurate and reviewed for grammatical and spelling errors.

All queries in relation to this policy should be addressed to the employee's manager.

#### Infringement - Breach of Internet and E-mail Guidelines

Notwithstanding the Theatre's right to retrieve and read any electronic mail messages, such messages should be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees are not authorised to retrieve or read any e-mail messages that are not sent to them. Any exception to this policy must receive prior approval from the employer. However, the confidentiality of any message should not be assumed. Even when a message is erased it is still possible to retrieve and read that message.

If any breach of our E-mail policy is observed then disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be taken.