Electronic Communication Policy and Procedures

Policy

This electronic communication policy and procedures establish guidelines for the proper and improper use of John Reading’s email and internet resources.

All staff members have the responsibility to use John Reading’s internet and email resources in a professional, ethical and lawful manner.

John Readings will not tolerate inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist, defamatory or harassing files, pictures, videos or email messages that might cause offence or embarrassment.

Procedures

Allocation and Access

Due to its global nature, users of the internet may encounter material that is inappropriate, offensive and, in many instances, illegal. John Readings cannot control the availability of this information and has made the decision not to restrict access to it.

However, staff members are notified that they are responsible for any material that they:

* + View on the internet,
	+ Download from the internet,
	+ Upload to the internet.

Authorised Use

* Internet and email services can only be used for:
	+ John Readings business use,
	+ Limited personal use.
* **John Readings business use** includes any activity that is conducted for purposes of accomplishing official business, professional duties including research and, where appropriate, professional development.
	+ Official business includes:
		- Using devices and software for work-related use,
		- Using the internet to access work-related information,
		- Sending emails to colleagues on work-related matters,
		- Sending emails outside of the work environment on work-related matters.
	+ Professional duties include:
		- Using the internet for professional development or other approved study, research or professional forums,
		- Limited use of computer, email and other facilities to support study (during personal time),
		- Limited support for employees to engage with professional associations.
* **Limited personal use** means use that is infrequent and brief. This use should generally occur during personal time and should not include use:
	+ That requires substantial expenditure of time,
	+ For private business, personal gain or profit,
	+ That impedes the efficiency of internet or email services,
	+ That clogs mailboxes with large numbers of messages,
	+ That would violate or breach any state or federal legislation,
	+ That would violate or breach John Readings organisational policies and procedures.
* As a guide, use that occurs more than a few times per day and/or for periods longer than a few minutes would not be considered limited personal use.
* Staff members may be held personally responsible for any use of internet and email services that do not comply with these principles.
	+ Limited personal use includes:
		- Limited personal emails and internet searches that are not unauthorised, unlawful or criminal,
		- Using a printer or photocopier to print out a few pages of personal information,
		- Making occasional brief local telephone calls,
		- Making financial transactions, including bill paying or home banking,
		- Using web-based email.

**Note:** It is expected that personal use of internet and email services is undertaken during a staff member’s personal time (Personal time: Staff members’ own time that is not during business hours, e.g. Before 9.00 am, after 5.00 pm and during lunch breaks).

Inappropriate Use

* John Reading will not tolerate inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist, defamatory or harassing files, pictures, videos or email messages that might cause offence or embarrassment. Never store, use, copy or circulate such material, and steer clear of dubious websites.
* If you receive inappropriate material by email or other means, delete it immediately. If you accidentally browse to an offensive website, click ‘back’ or close the window straight away. If you routinely receive a lot of spam, talk to your IT Manager who can get your spam settings checked.
* Staff members should not use internet and/or email services to:
	+ Infringe the copyright or other intellectual property right of John Readings or third parties,
	+ Download software (without authorisation by management for legitimate work purposes),
	+ Scan and email print resources protected by copyright,
	+ Disrupt communication and information devices through such means as mass emailing or transmitting files that place an unnecessary burden on departmental resources (without authorisation by management for legitimate work purposes),
	+ Access inappropriate internet sites,
	+ Download, distribute, store or display offensive or pornographic graphics, images or statements or other material obtained from inappropriate websites,
	+ Download, distribute, store or display material that could cause offence to others, e.g. Offensive material based on gender, ethnicity or religious and political beliefs,
	+ Download unreasonable amounts of material for non-business use,
	+ Download information for the purpose of providing it to external organisations or the general public (without authorisation by management for legitimate work purposes),
	+ Distribute defamatory, obscene, offensive, or harassing messages,
	+ Distribute confidential information (without authorisation by management for legitimate work purposes),
	+ Distribute messages that disclose personal information (without authorisation by management for legitimate work purposes),
	+ Distribute private information about other people,
	+ Distribute messages anonymously, using a false identity or using another person’s email account,
	+ Engage in any illegal or wrongful activity,
	+ Engage in private business or personal profit ventures,
	+ Engage in online chat forums, if not for legitimate work purposes,
	+ Stream video from internet sites, if not for legitimate work purposes.
* Any serious or repeated inappropriate use of the organisation’s electronic communication equipment, or any illegal materials will be reported directly to management, and disciplinary processes will be initiated. This may include summary dismissal in the event of a serious breach of the policy.
* Staff members may not:
	+ Disrupt or interfere with the use of internet or email services,
	+ Without authority destroy, alter, dismantle, disfigure, prevent rightful access to or otherwise interfere with the integrity of internet or email services,
	+ Misuse John Readings resources, including human and computing resources.

**Note:** Sending, receiving, displaying, printing or otherwise disseminating material, which is fraudulent, harassing, illegal, sexually explicit, obscene, intimidating or defamatory is prohibited. Staff members encountering such material should report it to the Director of Operations immediately. Sexual harassment laws (and other anti-discrimination laws) at both Commonwealth and state level can deem John Readings responsible for any breaches of anti-discrimination legislation committed by any staff member.

Communicating Information

Staff members should exercise the same care in drafting email messages as they would for any other form of written communication. Any messages on John Reading’s computer system may be subject to review by authorised John Reading personnel. Furthermore, email messages may be required to be disclosed, discovered or produced in a litigious matter involving John Readings.

**Relevant/ Related Documentation**

* Privacy Act
* WHS Act

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| Policy Owner | Operations |
| Approved by | Operations Manager |
| Date | March 202x |
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