



## COMPUTER, EMAIL AND INTERNET POLICY

### 1. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to minimize the threats and risks associated with email, voicemails, the Internet and computer usage in general to ensure that the best personal and professional standards underpin our usage of these technologies. The policy aims to inform those who are engaged by IAWA about their rights and responsibilities in this regard

### 2. Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to all persons, systems and services throughout IAWA, including remote locations, external data processing facilities and third parties who use our computing facilities. It applies to the use of Email, Internet and Computer Systems by all persons. Electronic mail enables persons to communicate promptly and efficiently both internally and externally. The Internet is a valuable resource, not just for communication, but also as a source of information. While email and the Internet bring many benefits to IAWA, they also bring risks. IAWA is responsible for material originating from its sites and material found on its machines. It also applies to any member or officer of IAWA who is emailing on IAWA's behalf.

### 3. Policy

#### 3.1 Email

Email is a computerised communication system that enables the sending and receiving of messages via PC's. Documents and other materials can be attached to emails. The risks associated with the use of emails include the following:

- (a) Your message may go to persons other than the intended recipient and if confidential or commercially sensitive, this could be damaging to IAWA.
- (b) Email messages can carry computer viruses that are potentially damaging to IAWA's computer operations.
- (c) Letters, files and other documents attached to emails may belong to others and there may be implications, including matters relating to copyright, in sending or receiving such material without permission.
- (d) Email is speedy. This may have implications for messages which are written in haste or written carelessly. With a slower medium, there may be more of an opportunity to reconsider, verify or rephrase. This could give rise to misunderstandings, offence or indeed to legal liability on IAWA's part for defamation, etc.
- (e) An email message may legally bind IAWA contractually in certain instances without the proper authority having been obtained internally.
- (f) It should be remembered that all personal data contained in emails may be accessible under Data Protection Legislation and furthermore a substantial



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portion of emails to Government and other public bodies may be accessible under the Freedom of Information Act.

- (g) Emails should be regarded as potentially public information, which carry a heightened risk of legal liability for the sender, the recipient and the organisations for which they work.
- (h) Offensive e-mails can also constitute bullying, slander, harassment and may cause offence to colleagues or other recipients and are treated in the same manner as other forms of abuse in line with our policies and will not be tolerated.

## **Rules for Email use**

In order to avoid or reduce the risks inherent in the use of email, the following must be noted and observed:

- (a) IAWA's name is included in the heading carried with every message sent by a person. This reflects on IAWA's image and reputation. Therefore, Email messages must be appropriate and professional.
- (b) A low level of personal use of email is tolerated on a person's own time on our systems, but it should not in any way interfere with IAWA's business or cause any harm to either IAWA or to IAWA's facilities.
- (c) Personal, confidential or commercially sensitive information should not be sent by email. Persons should be mindful that such information can be readily or rapidly re-distributed via email to a wide audience, perhaps even without the knowledge of the original sender.
- (d) Beware of what is written in email messages. Extra caution needs to be taken with email messages in respect of any disparaging remarks that may be contained therein. An email 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 innuendo.
- (e) Emails containing indecent, obscene, sexist, racist or other inappropriate remarks or pictures (including cartoons) are prohibited.
- (f) Do not enter contracts on behalf of IAWA using the Internet or email unless you have the express authority to do so from IAWA. Where appropriate, relevant legal advice should be obtained.
- (g) If you receive any offensive, unpleasant, harassing or intimidating messages via the Email then you are requested to inform us. It is important that IAWA traces such Emails as quickly as possible.
- (h) Documents prepared by IAWA for customer/clients may be attached via the email. However, excerpts from reports, publications etc. other than those written/issued by IAWA, may be in breach of copyright and the author's consent may be required. However, links to files and/or web locations are permissible. Information received from a customer/supplier should not be



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released to another customer/supplier without prior consent of the original sender.

- (i) Email services should not be used in any manner that may cause excessive strain on computer facilities or unnecessary interference with other users. This includes, but is not limited to the sending or forwarding of email chain letters; sending large numbers of unsolicited emails or re-sending the same message repeatedly and unnecessarily to one or more recipients.
- (j) Very large documents (of 4 Mbs or greater) should not be sent by email.
- (k) The email system employs user-ID's and associated passwords to isolate the communications of different users. Users must never share passwords or reveal them to anyone else. In general, persons should not leave their computer unattended without securing the session by password, timeout or signing off
- (l) Where a suspected virus is received advise us immediately. All incoming attachments must be virus checked. All storage devices and CD's should also be virus checked.
- (m) It is prohibited to forward emails concerning the business to your personal email address. All email communication to external contacts must be in line with normal business practice.
- (n) It is an offence and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal if you are found to be using the corporate system to the detriment of IAWA.
- (o) When communicating by email, particularly when forwarding email threads, please ensure that the previous email threads are appropriate to the end recipient. It may not be appropriate to forward emails internally to persons not included on the original email thread and it is not appropriate to forward emails externally at any time unless the author of the original email is advised.
- (p) Emails containing IAWA data should never be forwarded to your personal email account without permission

## ***Employer's Monitoring of Email***

IAWA reserves the right to monitor the contents and usage of the email system to support operational, maintenance, auditing, compliance (including compliance with Person policies), security and investigative activities and for other legitimate business purposes. Accordingly, you should use email with the knowledge that IAWA may from time to time examine the content of email communications and monitor your use of email.

Opening mailboxes for investigation requires authorisation on a case by case basis. IAWA may then search your mailbox, hard disk, network drive and relevant backups. Where a problem is found to exist following an investigation, it will be reported to those involved. Where the problem relates to material such as virus, which can damage the network, IAWA may immediately close down an account pending further investigation and action.



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Email monitoring system may be installed to protect IAWA's systems including to:-

- (a) Check mail messages for viruses and clean them before they enter the mail system.
- (b) Filter out mail messages with attached video files. Video files tend to be very large. They can have an adverse effect on the delivery of other mails, especially those from the Internet.
- (c) Filter out offensive language.

## 3.2 Internet

The Internet enables users to obtain information specific to their role and enables two way communication with sites appropriate to that role. The risks to IAWA of the misuse of the Internet can be as great as with email and hence the need for strict rules.

### **Internet Rules**

- (a) IAWA's Internet connections are intended for activities that either support IAWA's business or the professional development of Persons. As with email, a low level of personal surfing of the Internet is tolerated, but this must be in your own time and must not interfere with IAWA's business or cause any harm either to IAWA or to IAWA's facilities.
- (b) You must not deliberately perform acts which waste your own and your colleague's time or computer resources. These acts include:
  - (i) Playing games, online gambling, shopping etc.
  - (ii) Online non-business related chat groups;
  - (iii) Uploading/Downloading large unofficial files which create unnecessary non-business related loads on network traffic;
  - (iv) Accessing streaming audio/video files, for example, listening to music or watching movie clips;
  - (v) Forwarding non-business related audio/video files to other Persons or other persons;
  - (vi) Participating in mass non-business related mailings such as chain letters;
  - (vii) Sending unofficial attachments.
  - (viii) Accessing, storing or distributing images, 'video' or graphics which do not relate directly to the business.
  - (ix) Sending or circulating any defamatory information.



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- (x) Sending or circulating any data protected by Data Protection legislation.
  - (xi) Negligent Virus Transmission.
  - (xii) Connecting any equipment to our network without permission.
  - (xiii) Taking copies of our software or bringing illegal software into the workplace.
  - (xiv) Making personal use of any blog or social networking forum unless you are acting on our behalf as part of your role with us.
  - (xv) Attempting to gain unauthorised access to any computer system
- (c) Material should not be downloaded from services that have to be paid for without appropriate authorisation. Any such material must be directly related to the business activities of IAWA.
- (d) Mailing lists and newsgroups are useful for keeping abreast of developments in a person's particular professional field of interest. Mailing lists and newsgroups may be used for IAWA's business only. The guidelines as set out herein in respect of email usage and Internet browsing also apply to these media. Should members of a mailing list or newsgroup be in breach of these guidelines, Persons must immediately remove themselves from the service concerned.
- (e) To access, download or send any indecent, obscene, pornographic, sexist, racist, defamatory or other inappropriate materials or the circulation of such materials will be a dismissal offence. There is the potential for criminal liability arising from such activity under the Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998 and the Gardai or other appropriate authority may be informed as appropriate.
- (f) Persons may have access to Internet chat rooms, where these relate to their work. These facilities may be used solely and strictly in the course of a person's work. Use of any offensive, intemperate or otherwise unacceptable language is strictly forbidden and will be regarded as a serious breach for this policy.
- (g) Persons may not download copyrighted software, audio or visual files or any other copyrighted material from the Internet. Any such material discovered will be deleted without prior notification.
- (h) Persons must not trade on any internet site such as, but not limited to, ebay.com. Trading includes selling, buying and exchanging goods and/or services. Use of the Internet by Persons for such purposes is an example of serious misconduct and will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- (i) Persons must not access or use gambling internet sites. The use of the internet for such purposes is regarded as disciplinary offence and will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.



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- (j) Persons may only access the Internet through a computer attached to the employer's network and must do so through an approved Internet firewall or other security device provided for by IAWA.

## **Internet Monitoring**

IAWA employs software to monitor the use of web browsing facilities. A record of Internet sites visited by any person through any of IAWA's connections or any of IAWA's computers may be kept and used by IAWA at its discretion. Access to pornographic sites is absolutely forbidden and may result in the person being in serious breach of this policy and the law. IAWA will fully co-operate with the relevant authorities in investigating and prosecuting any such illegal access.

Persons may not download copyrighted software, audio or video files or any other copyrighted material from the internet. Any such material discovered will be deleted without prior notification.

Use of the Internet is subject to monitoring:

- (a) to support operational, maintenance, auditing and investigative activities;
- (b) for legitimate business purposes;
- (c) to verify this policy is being complied with;
- (d) in the course of an investigation;
- (e) for security and/or network management reasons.

Monitoring includes, but is not limited, to, electronic scanning for source and destination addresses. The distribution of any information through the Internet is subject to the scrutiny of IAWA. IAWA reserves the right to determine the suitability of this information.

## **3.3 General Principles re Internet and Email**

In addition to the foregoing, the Internet and email should not be used:

- (a) For personal gain or profit;
- (b) To represent yourself as someone else;
- (c) To post or download messages that contain political views;
- (d) To advertise or otherwise support unauthorised or illegal activities;
- (e) To provide lists or information about IAWA's Persons or the Persons of any related organisation to others and/or to send classified information without approval.



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## **3.4 Infringement/Breach of Internet and Email Rules**

Any breaches of these rules will be treated seriously and will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Persons should refer to the Disciplinary and Grievance policy. Persons must immediately report violations or suspected violations of these rules.