

**REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
10 MARCH 2003**

REPORT ON: ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS POLICY

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 210-2003

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval for the introduction of an Acceptable Use of Computers Policy to manage public access to the Internet throughout the Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department network.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the Acceptable Use of Computer Policy to facilitate the management of public access to the Internet.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications attached to the introduction of the Acceptable Use of Computers Policy.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Managing access and promoting good practice on the Internet will ensure that the citizens of Dundee have the opportunity to obtain the knowledge, skills and information required to play a full and relevant part in society.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The introduction of an Acceptable Use of Computers Policy will ensure that all members of the community have access to ICT through the Internet appropriate to their needs.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 Through funding primarily provided by the New Opportunities Fund to set up Learning Centres, the Department offers free public access to computers, allowing users to surf the Internet.

However, it is recognised that such access may be open to misuse and abuse. Accordingly, the Acceptable Use of Computers Policy provides information on good practice and guidelines to be followed.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Executive and the Directors of Support Services, Finance and Information Technology have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

Fraser R Patrick
Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development
MM/aa

27 February 2003

Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department

Acceptable Use of Computers

1. Introduction

In response to advances in technology, and the changing needs of the community, Dundee City Council's Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department is delighted to provide free access to the Internet and other information technology and in so doing supports the educational, recreational and cultural needs of all members of the community.

The Internet:

The Internet enables access to valuable information resources in many different formats. Dundee City Council shall provide access to information to members of the public. Such access may, however, be open to misuse and abuse. This document has been produced in order to safeguard the interests of Dundee City Council and the communities it serves.

2. The Internet and Your Responsibility

Whilst the Internet contains a wealth of valuable and interesting information, some of this information may be inaccurate, out of date, controversial, offensive or illegal.

Dundee City Council cannot be held responsible for the quality, accuracy or availability of information accessed through the Internet, although we will try to signpost sites that appear to be authoritative. As an internet user, therefore, it is your personal responsibility to assess the accuracy of information you access.

Dundee City Council accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury, direct or indirect, suffered as a result of using these computer resources or relying on the information obtained from such use.

3. Security

Filtering:

Filtering software will be used in an attempt to screen out offensive and potentially illegal Internet material. Ultimately, parents or guardians must assume responsibility for deciding what internet resources are appropriate for their children.

There are 4 levels of Internet access:

- **Children aged 8 years and under**

We have identified a pre-determined number of sites which we deem suitable for children aged 8 and under to access. These sites are monitored on a regular basis.

- **Users aged between 8 and 16 years**

This level allows access to sites using pre-defined categories set by the software provider that Dundee City Council assumes will be suitable for children aged 8-16 years.

Any sites that are found to be inappropriate by Dundee City Council shall no longer be made accessible to users.

Whilst every effort is made to continually monitor this level of access, the Council has no control over the content of these classifications.

- **Users aged 16 years and over**

This level allows access to sites using pre-defined categories set by the software provider that Dundee City Council assumes will be suitable for users aged 16 years and over.

Any sites that are found to be inappropriate by Dundee City Council shall no longer be made accessible to users.

Whilst every effort is made to continually monitor this level of access, the Council has no control over the content of these classifications.

- **Specialist access**

See a member of staff for assistance with access to areas for purposes of specific interest, research, etc.

Virus-checking software will run on all computers.

Internet users may not load their own software or connect their own computer equipment to library computer equipment. Exceptions are possible for special equipment to help with general computer use (e.g. adaptive hardware for users with Special Needs).

Downloading:

Information from the Internet may be downloaded (within copyright restrictions) to floppy disk.

4. Conditions of Access

Membership:

Access to computers in Dundee City Council's Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department is available to all.

All users will be asked to complete an on screen Declaration Form stating that they have read this document and agree to abide by its terms and conditions.

Children and Young People:

Children aged under 8 will be allowed Internet access only if under direct supervision of a parent, legal guardian or other responsible adult.

Children and young people up to 16 will be allowed Internet access provided that a parent or legal guardian has signed a consent form on their behalf. Eligibility for Internet access will be recorded on their membership card.

Cost:

The use of computers in Dundee City Council's Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department is free of charge. However, other charges may be applied to computer usage. These are:

Floppy Disks: 75p per disk

Printing: 10p per sheet: the first 10 in black and white print are free of charge, the first 5 sheets in colour.

If a combination of black and white and colour prints is made, charges will be based on 1 colour print equating to 2 black and white prints.

Booking a computer session:

Sessions may be booked in advance, up to seven days ahead, by telephone, on-line by e-mail or other means, or in person.

Sessions can be booked in half-hourly slots with a maximum of two hours. If the demand for computers is not high at the time, a session may be extended.

Subject to availability, some computers may be available for un-booked use.

Only two people may use a computer at any one time. However, under certain circumstances and at the discretion of staff, this quota may be increased.

5. Your Session in Progress

Staff will try wherever possible to help internet users in the proper use of the computers. However, as demand for computer access rises, staff may not always be able to give dedicated assistance. Information on the availability of training is available at all times.

Dundee City Council can monitor access to Internet sites. Any public access of illegal material shall be the subject of further action. Offensive or controversial material may also be the subject of further action. If in any doubt about the nature of the material being accessed, guidance should be sought from a member of staff.

6. Prohibited Uses

Dundee City Council does not prohibit specific on-line activities as long as they are not considered to be illegal, offensive, obscene, abusive or troublesome to other computer users. However, internet users should be aware that risks are attached to some on-line activities:

- Broadcasting personal or private details over the network may lead to the receiving of unwanted mail or unwanted attention.

- On-line financial transactions are an increasingly common use of the Internet and are often conducted safely over secure connections. However, Dundee City Council cannot be held responsible for any losses resulting from sending confidential financial information via the Internet.
- Some on-line activities can seriously impact on the ability of the network to deliver other services. Dundee City Council reserves the right to restrict access to such services.

Internet users must not interfere with equipment or amend or delete existing software.

7. Penalties for Misuse

Internet users should not access, download, transmit or print any obscene, offensive or illegal material. Staff reserve the right to terminate any Internet connection, which, in their opinion, does not meet this requirement.

Internet users should not violate copyright laws by unauthorised reproduction or distribution of copyright or licensed materials.

Any contravention of these regulations may result in access to Internet facilities being withdrawn. Where it is suspected that a criminal act or acts have taken place Dundee City Council shall immediately refer an internet user to the police and shall provide details to the police of all information accessed.

In the case of contravention by an internet user aged under 16, the parent or guardian who signed the consent form will be notified.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains timely, relevant and in line with national policies and campaigns.