

**Kerr County
Information/Technology
Policies**

Adopted by

**Kerr County
Commissioners Court**

June 14, 2004

Table of Contents

1. Policy	1
2. Terminology	1
2.1 Chain Letter	1
2.2 Client	1
2.3 Computing Ethics	2
2.4 E-Mail	2
2.5 Hack	2
2.6 Internet	2
2.7 Hoax Message	2
2.8 Home Page	2
2.9 Intellectual Property	2
2.10 Network	2
2.11 Processes	2
2.12 Server	2
2.13 Shareware	3
2.14 Software License Agreement	3
2.15 Software Piracy	3
2.16 Unauthorized Copying	3
2.17 Unauthorized Copying	3
2.18 World Wide Web (WWW or the Web)	3
2.19 Web Page	3
2.20 Worm	4
3. Use of Kerr County Information Technology	4
3.1 Authorization	4
3.2 Electronic Mail and Internet Use	4
3.3 Network Operability	5
3.4 Personal Use	5
3.5 Right to Privacy	5
3.6 Broadcast Messages	6
3.7 Disciplinary Action	6
4. Software	7
4.1 Copyrighted Software	7
4.2 Software Approval	7

4.3	Software Purchases	7
4.4	Unauthorized Purchases	8
4.5	Damaged Software	8
4.6	Software Accounting	8
4.7	Software Documentation/Record Keeping	8
5.	Kerr County's Home Page	9
6.	Computer Ethics	9
7.	Etiquette	9
9.	E-mail Guidelines	9

1. Policy

It is the policy of Kerr County to provide an atmosphere that encourages the free exchange of ideas and sharing of information to benefit the conduct of official Kerr County business.

Access to this environment and Kerr County's information technology resources is a privilege and must be treated with the highest standard of ethics. Kerr County expects all individuals to use the computing and information technology resources in a legal, ethical, and responsible manner; respecting the public trust through which these resources have been provided, the rights and privacy of others, the integrity of facilities and controls, and all pertinent laws and Kerr County policies and standards.

Electronic mail and Internet access is provided to Kerr County representatives such as elected officials, department heads, employees, interns, temporary agency employees and volunteers as business communications tools. Kerr County representatives may have access to one or more forms of electronic media and services (computers, e-mail, telephones, voice mail, fax machines, copying machines, external electronic bulletin boards, wire services, on-line services, the Internet and the World Wide Web).

The following procedures apply to all electronic media and services, which are:

- Accessed on or from Kerr County premises;
- Accessed using Kerr County computer or other equipment, or via
- Kerr County-paid access methods, and/or used in a manner which identifies the individual with Kerr County.

By using or accessing any such electronic media in the manner described, the employee shall be deemed to have agreed to be bound by these procedures.

2. Terminology

2.1 Chain Letter

A letter sent to a number of people asking each recipient to send copies with the same request to a specified number of others. The circulation of a chain letter increases in geometrical progression as long as the instructions are followed by all recipients.

2.2 Client

Is one end of a network protocol that provides a user interface to the server.

2.3 Computing Ethics

A set of accepted manners to be observed while using information technology resources.

2.4 E-Mail

Electronic mail is a means of sending messages between computers using a computer network or over a modem connected to a telephone line.

2.5 Hack

An individual who uses programming skills to gain illegal access to a computer network or file.

2.6 Internet

The Internet is a network of computer networks through which information or electronic mail may travel. Computer users can use the Internet like a telephone or fax to exchange information quickly and efficiently.

2.7 Hoax Message

Any message used to deceive by a story or a trick, for sport or mischief.

2.8 Home Page

The starting point for most organizations to place links to other parts of the web.

2.9 Intellectual Property

An original computer program is regarded by law as the intellectual property of the person or company which created the work. Computer programs are protected under copyright law, which provides that any unauthorized copying of such works is illegal.

2.10 Network

A collection of two or more computers and associated devices that are linked together with communications equipment.

2.11 Processes

A part of a running software program or other computing operation that does a single task.

2.12 Server

A computer that provides information or programs to client computers on a network, whether it be an in-house server or an Internet server.

2.13 Shareware

Software available on the Internet for downloading so you can try it before buying it. This software is copyrighted and distributed on a “free-will donation” basis, either via the Internet or by being passed along by satisfied customers. Users who continue to use the program after a trial period are expected to pay a registration fee. In return, they get documentation, technical support, and access to updated versions.

2.14 Software License Agreement:

A software license agreement states the terms of usage, as permitted by the copyright owner, for the specific software product to which it pertains. The license agreement accompanying software is stated explicitly in the software documentation or on the computer screen when the program is started. The price of software covers the legal acquisition of the software license and binds the purchaser to use the software only according to the terms and agreements stated in the license.

2.15 Software Piracy

Software piracy is the term used to describe the unauthorized copying or use of a computer program in any manner other than what is permitted by copyright law or by the author as stated in the software licensing agreement. Any person who engages in software piracy commits an illegal act under general copyright law.

2.16 Unauthorized Copying

The manufacturer’s license agreement should be followed when making back up copies of the software. Unless otherwise stated, the purchase of a software license allows the purchaser to make a “back-up” copy, to be used in case the original software disk malfunctions or is destroyed.

2.17 Virus

A computer program that replicates on computer systems by incorporating itself into shared programs.

2.18 World Wide Web (WWW or the Web)

The part of the Internet which provides a way for organizations or individuals to publish information which is then available to a world wide audience. The World Wide Web currently uses an Internet protocol called HTTP or Hyper Text Transfer Protocol and sends files written in a language called HTML or Hyper Text Markup Language. An HTTP server provides Web pages to client programs called browsers which retrieve and display the information stored on the Web server.

2.19 Web Page

A single page displayed by a Web browser.

2.20 Worm

Known primarily as a virus, it is a computer program that can replicate itself.

3. Use of Kerr County Information Technology

3.1 Prohibited actions include but are not limited to:

- a. Personal use, except as provided by Sec.3.2
- b. Use of unauthorized resources;
- c. Accessing applications, files, data or processes without appropriate authorization.
- d. Intent to research or exploit security flaws to gain system or data access;
- e. Connecting any hardware to the network or PC without prior approval from the Information Technology Department.
- f. Altering or destroying information with the intent to cause harm or injury to Kerr County or an employee of Kerr County.
- g. Attempting to deliberately degrade performance or deny service.
- h. Installation of any software without prior approval of the Information Technology Department.
- i. Sending bomb threats or “hoax” messages.
- j. Use of computing or network resources for advertising or commercial purposes.

3.2 Electronic Mail and Internet Use

Kerr County elected officials, department heads and employees shall not knowingly send, receive, store, or access sites that are deemed by Kerr County to promote, encourage, or endorse discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, political affiliation, religion, disability, or sexual orientation;

Electronic media may not be used for knowingly transmitting, retrieving or storage of any communications including but not limited to:

- a. Those of a discriminatory or harassing nature;
- b. Those that are derogatory to any individual or group
- c. Those that are obscene or of a pornographic nature;
- d. Those that are of a defamatory or threatening nature;
- e. Chain letters;
- f. Bomb threats or “hoax messages;”
- g. E-mail bombs that may cause network problems and disrupt service for other users;
- h. Those which attempt to hide the identity of the sender, or represent the sender as someone else or from another source;

- i. Those for advertising or other commercial purposes; or
- j. Those intended for any other purpose which is illegal or against Kerr County policy or contrary to Kerr County's interest.

Supervisors may authorize limited use of electronic mail for personal purposes so long as productivity is not adversely impacted.

3.3 Network Operability

Kerr County employees and/or representatives may not attempt to read, "hack" into other systems or other people's logins, or "crack" passwords, breach computer or network security measures, or monitor electronic files or communications of other employees or third parties except by explicit direction of the department head.

Kerr County employees and/or representatives may not share user logon and passwords, access or copy another user's electronic mail, data, programs, or other file(s) without prior approval of the elected official or department head for whom the employee directly works.

Electronic media and services should not be used in a manner that will likely cause network congestion or significantly hamper the ability of other people to access and use the system, such as distributing computer worms or viruses.

Kerr County employees and/or representatives may not alter or destroy information with the intent to cause harm or injury to Kerr County or any other employee or Kerr County.

Kerr County employees and/or representatives may not tap a phone line or run a network sniffer without authorization.

3.4 Personal Use

Electronic media and services are exclusively for Kerr County business use.

Limited, occasional or incidental use of electronic media (sending or receiving) for personal, non-business purposes may be authorized by a supervisor. The use of streaming audio or video for personal use is prohibited.

3.5 Right to Privacy

Kerr County reserves the right for elected officers and/or department heads to monitor, access, review, copy or delete each employee's access or use of the internet and electronic mail including but not limited to e-mail, word processing, utility programs, spreadsheets, voicemail, telephones,

internet/BBS access, and to block access to areas of the Internet which have no value to Kerr County.

Kerr County employees and/or representatives have no legitimate expectation of privacy in their use of the Internet or Electronic Mail. Use of Kerr County's systems and hardware constitutes consent to having internet and electronic mail usage monitored.

All documents are the property of Kerr County, and are not to be removed from Kerr County premises or copied to removable media without the approval of the elected official and/or the department head.

Kerr County reserves the right to purge electronic message(s) and/or documents, attachments older than four (4) months. Messages and/or documents including attachments sent and/or received via electronic mail which must be retained for greater than four (4) months must be filed in "My Documents" on the user's hard drive or on a network shared drive where applicable.

All Kerr County employees and/or representatives have the obligation to report suspected violations of this policy to their elected official, department head, or in the alternative Commissioners Court.

3.6 *Broadcast Messages*

Permission for county-wide broadcasting of messages must be obtained from either the elected official or department head for which the employee and/or representative works.

3.7 *Disciplinary Action*

Any employee found to be abusing the privilege of Kerr County-facilitated access to electronic media or services will be subject to disciplinary action by the elected official or department head including termination of employment and/or risk having the privilege removed him/herself and possibly other employees.

3.8 *Confidential Data*

Information technology staff shall be responsible for maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of information viewed during troubleshooting and monitoring of the county's network.

All county records, including electronic records with the exception of judicial records, are subject to the Public Information Act.

4. Software

4.1 Copyrighted Software

Kerr County elected officials, department heads, employees and/or representatives obtaining electronic access to other companies or individuals' materials must respect all copyrights and may not copy, retrieve, modify, or forward copyrighted materials except as permitted by the copyright owner.

Kerr County employees and/or representatives shall abide by applicable laws and Kerr County policies and respect the copyrights and intellectual property laws of others, including the legal use of copyrighted software.

Use of unauthorized software copies are a violation of the law and unauthorized copying of software will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Kerr County employees and/or representatives must comply with all license or purchase terms regulating the use of software.

4.2 Software Approval

Approval must be obtained from the Kerr County Information Technology Department prior to using any publicly available software package, download of demo software, or software on preview. **(A software approval form is available for this purpose).**

Software that may be marked as "free," "public domain," and "public use" may be free for personal use but not corporate and/or governmental use. In downloading software from the Internet, use of this software can violate copyright or licensing requirements, thus subject Kerr County to unnecessary and expensive litigation.

4.3 Software Purchases

Only copyrighted software, authorized for use and/or purchased in compliance with Kerr County's software procurement policies, will be eligible for payment.

Only original manufacturer's copyrighted software will be eligible for purchase and payment.

The Kerr County Information Technology Department is responsible for safekeeping of all software purchased including licenses and media. License agreements will be kept as the property of Kerr County. A copy of the license agreement may be kept by an elected official or department head.

4.4 Unauthorized Purchases

All software purchased must have prior approval. Any software purchased without an approved request and purchase order issued by the information technology department will be considered an unauthorized purchase and will become the financial responsibility of the employee who made the purchase.

“Shareware” is not eligible for purchase and any “shareware” purchased will become the financial responsibility of the employee making the purchase.

The use of software, free or otherwise not authorized or purchased by Kerr County is prohibited. Employees not adhering to this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

4.5 Damaged Software

It is the responsibility of the Information Technology Department to return any damaged software to the vendor and seek the appropriate credit or refund, if paid.

4.6 Software Accounting

Kerr County Information Technology Department will take inventory of each desktop or laptop computer’s software on a periodic basis. Departments must allow access to all directories, software disks, and documentation upon request by ITD personnel.

4.7 Software Documentation/Record Keeping

All copyrighted software must include proper documentation (license agreement).

Only under the following circumstances may Kerr County employees/representatives copy software:

- a. Prior authorization must be obtained from the information technology department.
- b. Back-up copies will be permitted if allowed in the software license agreement.
- c. Back-up copies are labeled as such and become the property of Kerr County.

5. Kerr County's Home Page

Kerr County's Home Page will contain the official county seal, information about county activities, meetings, and public hearings. Likewise, information on how to contact all elected officials or departments by e-mail, by regular mail, or by fax or telephone will be included.

Confidential information shall not be released via the Internet.

Release of information that might compromise public safety should be avoided at all times.

Kerr County's Home Page will be coordinated and produced by the information technology department. No modifications or additions including links to other sites can be made to Kerr County's Home Page without prior approval of the information technology department

6. Computer Ethics

Kerr County is a political subdivision of the State of Texas. Elected officials, employees and/or representatives of Kerr County have a responsibility to conduct themselves in an ethical manner.

Electronic mail should be treated as privileged in the same manner as first class U.S. mail.

Any system weaknesses should be reported to the Information Technology Department immediately.

Data obtained inappropriately (i.e., proprietary) should not be used.

7. Etiquette

Each network/system (e.g., Law Enforcement, District Clerk, County Clerk, Auditing, Treasurer, Tax Assessor, etc.) has its own set of policies, practices and procedures. Actions which are routinely allowed on one network or system may be controlled or even forbidden on other networks or systems. It is the user's responsibility to abide by the policies, practices and procedures of all networks or systems with which they may communicate.

8. Policy

Each department head or elected official shall develop and implement written guidelines and/or policies for county owned computer usage in each office.