



## **ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

In order to serve the needs of the People of God in the Diocese of Owensboro (“the Diocese”) and to be responsible stewards of the gifts given to the Diocese, the Bishop of the Diocese issues the following policy. This policy regulates the use of Technology and Social Media for all employees and volunteers of the Diocese and all diocesan parishes and other diocesan entities (“personnel”).

The goals of the Diocese in using Technology are to improve communication among diocesan and parish personnel; to provide pertinent information to a larger audience; and to allow both parish and diocesan personnel to have access to the wealth of appropriate and necessary information available on Technology.

Technology and social media should be viewed as tools to further the purposes and goals of the Diocese, which purposes and goals must always conform to the mission and work of the universal Roman Catholic Church. It is, therefore, imperative that personnel, whether they are employees or volunteers, conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner while using Technology.

The intent of this *Diocesan Policy on Acceptable Use of Technology and Social Media* is to ensure that all uses of Technology by personnel are consistent with the purposes and mission of the Diocese. This policy does not attempt to articulate all required or proscribed behavior by personnel. Personnel utilizing technology and social media, either for ministerial or personal use, must be vigilant in representing themselves as ministers of the Catholic Church in all interactions that can be viewed publicly. Anything that could cause scandal to the ministry should be avoided. Such may include mention of inappropriate use of alcohol, advocacy of inappropriate music/movies, inappropriate language, inappropriate dress, or the expression of opinions that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. One’s personal social networking, blog, websites, and other online activities and communications are public in nature, and employees and volunteers give up any expectation of privacy when they engage in public online activity and communication. Employees and volunteers are role models for the faithful and young people of the Church. The Diocese expects employees and volunteers to conduct themselves accordingly both while on-duty and off-duty from an employed or volunteer position. Therefore personnel are to use good judgment and abide by the following:

1. All use of Technology for diocesan or parish ministry, such as a website and e-mail, social networking, video sharing, message board and blog accounts (“diocesan accounts”) must be in support of the work of the church and the diocese.
2. Any use of Technology through diocesan accounts for illegal purposes, or in support of illegal activities, is prohibited.
3. Any use of Technology through diocesan accounts to communicate threatening, abusive, derogatory, sexually oriented/explicit or obscene language or material is prohibited. Communications should be professional and are being rendered on behalf of the parish or Diocese.
4. Each website, social networking, video sharing, message board and blog site used for diocesan or parish ministry must be registered with the Diocesan Communication Office and must have at least two adult administrators who can access and monitor the site. Administrators are to ensure the site complies with this and all Diocesan policies and codes of conduct.
5. Any use of diocesan accounts for commercial purposes is prohibited.
6. Any use of diocesan accounts for partisan political lobbying is prohibited.
7. Any use of Technology in a manner that serves to disrupt the use of the network by other users is prohibited.
8. All material viewed on web sites should be considered copyrighted and not available for reproduction, unless specifically stated otherwise or unless specific permission is granted for reproduction. All parishes, schools and offices operating under the auspices of the Owensboro Diocese may reproduce all original material on the diocesan web site, [owensborodiocese.org](http://owensborodiocese.org), excluding material that is hyperlinked from an outside URL. Permission should be received before a user posts information released by other individuals or parishes. Users should also make every effort to validate information and sources before posting information, and to list sources when passing along information received.
9. Diocesan accounts should be used only by the personnel who are authorized user(s) of the account, and only for the authorized purpose. Passwords should be used only by authorized personnel. Ability to access the McRaith Catholic Center's network, email, and records contained within are controlled by means of username and password.

10. All users must adhere to security standards for data and records which include, confidentiality, assuring preservation of data, protecting passwords, and immediately reporting any suspected security violations.

11. Personnel are required to maintain virus protection software on their computers used for telecommunications, after consulting their respective IT expert.

12. Diocesan entities that allow children to have access to Technology must have safeguards to ensure that children cannot access inappropriate material.

Any violation of this or any other Diocesan policy via technology should be brought to the attention of the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator or the Diocesan Communications Director immediately. This may be done anonymously. Violators are subject to action, up to and including, termination of employment.



Diocese of  
**OWENSBORO**

## **USE OF THE INTERNET AND EMAIL GUIDELINES**

### **Overview**

These guidelines pertain to the access and use of the Internet and email **on computers belonging to the diocese or parishes, and connected to internet providers paid for by church funds.** In addition, all existing laws and policies apply to conduct on the Internet, especially those that deal with intellectual property protection, privacy, pornography, sexual harassment, information and data security, and confidentiality.

While internet access has the potential for employees, priests and deacons to do their work faster or smarter, there is justifiable concern that it can also be misused. Such misuse can waste time, potentially violate government laws or church policies, garner negative publicity for the church and potentially expose it to significant legal liabilities. This policy is designed to facilitate understanding of the expectations for the proper use of these resources.

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that contains millions of pages of information, and as a form of modern technology and communication the Internet is effective in the performance of business and a valuable method of research for information.

However, users are cautioned that many of the pages accessible through the internet include offensive, sexually explicit, and inappropriate material. In general, it is difficult to avoid at least some contact with this material while using the internet. Even common search requests may lead to sites with highly offensive content. Additionally, having an e-mail address on the internet may lead to receipt of unsolicited e-mail containing offensive content. The ease of access and the availability of information can also result in violation of copyright or entitlement laws. Users accessing the internet do so at their own risk and the diocese or parish is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded by users from the internet, or illegal behavior or conduct by users.

To minimize these risks, use of the internet and email by employees, priests and deacons of the Diocese of Owensboro is guided by the following:

### **Permitted Use of Computers, Networks, Internet and Email**

Computers and networks that are the property of the diocese or parish are to be used for legitimate church business purposes. Employees, priests and deacons have a responsibility to use computers and networks belonging to the diocese or parish, the Internet, and email in a professional, lawful and ethical manner. Users are cautioned that the same appropriate behavior should be used for their personal computers and internet access.

## **Unacceptable Use**

In particular, the following is deemed unacceptable use or behavior by employees, priests and deacons:

- deliberately visiting Internet sites that contain obscene, hateful or pornographic material
- posting, storing, transmitting or disseminating unlawful material, including without limitation, child or other pornography, any content, data or other material which is libelous, obscene, hateful, unlawful, threatening, or ethnically offensive, defamatory or which in any way constitute a criminal offense
- using the computer to perpetrate any form of fraud; or software or music piracy
- using the Internet or email to send offensive or harassing material to other users
- downloading commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, unless this download is covered or permitted under a commercial agreement or other such license
- hacking into unauthorized areas
- creating or transmitting defamatory material
- undertaking deliberate activities that waste time or network resources
- introducing any form of computer virus into the computer or network

Improper use of the computer, network, or the Internet has the potential to result in disciplinary action, and civil and/or criminal liability.

## **Summary**

These guidelines do not contain all of the “do’s and don’ts” of internet usage. While these guidelines list examples of improper usage; morality, good judgment and common sense are essential to the appropriate use of the Internet. Use of the internet and email must ensure that it complies with current legislation, and does not create a risk or scandal to the church through misuse and inappropriate behavior.

Employees, priests or deacons who have concerns about any form of internet addiction or improper use thereof are encouraged to contact the Bishop or Vicar of Clergy for counseling referral, or seek counseling on their own.