

POLICY ON ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET
(Effective May 16, 2006)

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:

The goals of the Diocese in using the Internet 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 (“personnel”) to have access to the wealth of appropriate and necessary information available on the Internet.

The Internet should be viewed as a tool 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 the Internet.

The intent of this Diocesan *Policy on Acceptable Use of the Internet* is to ensure that all uses of the Internet 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. The Internet is an open network in both implementation and spirit. Technical measures could have been invoked to constrain Internet use, but such measures would have limited the utility of the Internet. Instead, in any specific situation, each individual’s judgment of appropriate conduct is relied upon. To assist in such judgment, the following general guidelines are offered:

1. All use of the Internet through diocesan accounts must be in support of the work of the church and the diocese.
2. Any use of the Internet through diocesan accounts for illegal purposes, or in support of illegal activities, is prohibited.
3. Any use of the Internet through diocesan accounts to communicate threatening, abusive, sexually oriented/explicit or obscene language or material is prohibited.
4. Any use of diocesan e-mail accounts or web sites for commercial purposes is prohibited.
5. Any use of diocesan e-mail accounts or web sites for partisan political lobbying is prohibited.
6. Any use of the Internet in a manner that serves to disrupt the use of the network by other users is prohibited.

7. 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, www.rcdok.org, excluding material that is hyperlinked from an outside URL.
8. Diocesan e-mail accounts should be used only by the personnel who are authorized user(s) of the account, and only for the authorized purpose. Passwords allowing entry into secured sections of the diocesan web site should be used only by authorized personnel.
9. All communications and information accessible via the Internet should be assumed to be private property. 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.
10. Personnel are strongly encouraged to maintain virus protection software on their computers used for telecommunications, after consulting their respective IT expert.
11. Schools and any other diocesan entities that allow children to have access to the Internet must have safeguards to ensure that children cannot access inappropriate material.
12. All diocesan-related conferences (chat rooms) and bulletin boards must have at least the implied consent of the Bishop and will be moderated by appropriate qualified personnel.