

VERMONT LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



POLICY MANUAL

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BY THE

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

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1. General

- 1.1. The Vermont State House computer systems are maintained and operated to further the mission and functions of the Vermont General Assembly.
- 1.2. Decisions regarding technologies, including selection of hardware and software, location of equipment, life-cycle replacements, operations, policies, etc., are made in the best interests of the Legislature as a whole.
- 1.3. The Legislative Information Technology department operates under the direction and oversight of the Legislative Information Technology Committee, the Legislative Staff Information Systems Team, and the Director of Legislative Information Technology.
- 1.4. As an agency of the legislative branch, the Legislative Information Technology department is not subject to directives, regulations, or policies of the Department of Information and Innovation or any other executive branch agency.

2. Hours of Operation and Service Interruptions

- 2.1. The Vermont State House computer system will generally be up and available for use at all times. However, planned and unplanned service interruptions may occur.
- 2.2. Support is generally available only during regular business hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday; but may be scheduled in advance if needed for events at other times. Support is available in emergencies which occur outside of regular business hours.
- 2.3. Scheduled computer system outages are due to maintenance operations. Users will be notified of scheduled computer system outages in advance. Ideally, at least twenty-four hours notice will be given, although this is not always possible..
- 2.4. Unplanned outages may be caused by failures of hardware, software, or infrastructure. When an unplanned outage occurs, departments will be notified and provided with a “best guess” estimate for when service will be restored.
- 2.5. When service is restored following a planned or unplanned outage, departments will be notified.

3. Appropriate Use

- 3.1. The Vermont State House computer system is intended to support the business of the Vermont Legislature and members' individual legislative activities, but may not be used for campaign activities.
 - 3.1.1. A reasonable amount of personal use of the system (for communication with family and friends, independent learning, public service, etc.) is permitted as long as such use conforms with these policies and does not interfere with work activities or other employees' access to the system.
 - 3.1.2. Members of the legislature may make reasonable use of the system to maintain contact with their regular workplaces during the legislative session.
- 3.2. Users of the computer system may not use the system for illegal or unlawful purposes, including, but not limited to, copyright infringement, obscenity, libel, slander, fraud, defamation, plagiarism, harassment, intimidation, forgery, impersonation, illegal gambling, soliciting for illegal pyramid schemes, and computer tampering (e.g. spreading computer viruses).
- 3.3. Users of the computer system may not use the system to intentionally violate federal copyright laws by making illegal copies of copyrighted software installed on the State House Computer System, installing illegally copied software on the State House Computer System, downloading copyrighted material (including both software and published material) from the Internet; or posting illegally copied material to the Internet.
- 3.4. Users of the computer system may not use the system for mass mailings, access for non-employees to legislative resources or network facilities, uploading and downloading of files for personal use, access to pornographic sites, gaming, commercial activity, or the dissemination of chain letters.
- 3.5. There are times and circumstances when members and staff of the Vermont Legislature might, for work-related purposes only, need to access Web sites that would not normally be considered appropriate in a workplace context. Those occasions are rare, and should be governed by the member's and staff's best judgment.

4. Security

4.1. Authorized Users

- 4.1.1. The State House computer system may only be used by members of the Vermont Legislature, legislative staff, contractors under the supervision of legislative employees, paid or unpaid interns hired or appointed by the Legislature or a Legislative department, and authorized third parties (volunteers, tour guides, the Friends of the State House, etc.).
- 4.1.2. The State House computer system may not be used by family or friends of members of the Vermont Legislature, family or friends of legislative staff, paid or unpaid interns hired by individual members, members of the public, or any other non-legislative employee.
- 4.1.3. One or more workstations, not attached to the State House computer system, are provided specifically for the use of the public.

4.2. Access to the computer system

- 4.2.1. A login account to the Vermont State House computer system will be created whenever a new member of the legislature is elected or appointed, or when a new member of the staff is hired. In order to have the login account created before the employee begins work, the hiring office must notify the State House IT department at least 48 hours before the start date.
- 4.2.2. Before being given access to his or her login account, the new user will be given a copy of these policies, and will sign a document acknowledging receipt of the policies.
- 4.2.3. The new user will be granted the level of access to applications, services, documents, and data that is appropriate for the user's department and position.
- 4.2.4. If the user routinely needs additional access to applications, services, documents, or other data in order to perform his or her job duties, such access will be granted, subject to the approval of the user's supervisor.

4.3. Passwords

- 4.3.1. Users of the computer system must treat user IDs and passwords as confidential information and not release them to any unauthorized person. This includes login passwords, email passwords, and remote access passwords.
- 4.3.2. Login passwords will expire after not more than one year, and cannot be reused. (Note: industry best practices provide that login passwords should expire after two to six months)
- 4.3.3. Login passwords for the Vermont State House computer system will be a minimum of 6 characters long. Strong passwords (incorporating upper and lower case letters, numbers, and symbols) are very strongly recommended.

- 4.3.4. The State House IT staff does not have the ability to find out the current password for a user who has forgotten it, but can create a new password for the user upon request.
- 4.4. Termination of employment
 - 4.4.1. Login accounts will be deactivated when a member of the legislature or a staff person is terminated or otherwise leaves the employment of the legislature.
 - 4.4.2. It is the responsibility of each legislative department to notify the IT staff when an employee is terminated or otherwise leaves the Legislature.
 - 4.4.3. When a member or a staff person leaves the employment of the legislature, their access to their email box will be revoked. Upon request, the State House IT staff will set up an auto-reply or a forwarding rule on a former employee's mailbox for a period of one month.

5. Data

5.1. Work-related Data

- 5.1.1. All work-related data must be stored on network drives, not on the local workstation. The State House IT department will be unable to recover lost data stored on the local workstation in violation of this policy.
- 5.1.2. For legislative staff, all work-related documents should be stored within the DM document management system. Members of the legislature should store work-related documents in their My Documents folder, which is a network location.
- 5.1.3. The Joint Fiscal Office maintains a non-DM directory structure which predates the Vermont State House computer system. Documents and spreadsheets relating to this structure may be stored outside of DM.
- 5.1.4. Documents created in the DM system are assigned default security based on the user's department. Users can modify the default security, if needed.
- 5.1.5. The default security for all documents includes full access by the State House IT staff (the DOCS_SUPERVISORS group). Users should NOT remove this security group, as it could result in the document becoming permanently locked.
- 5.1.6. To ensure that legislative documents remain as accessible as possible under future technologies, legislative documents (bills, calendars, journals, amendments, acts, etc.) should not make use of advanced features of the word processing software, such as tables of contents, automatic outlining, footnotes, OLE linkage, etc.

5.2. Personal Data

- 5.2.1. No personal data files may be stored on the State House computer system or on individual workstations.
 - 5.2.1.1. The State House IT department cannot guarantee either the integrity or confidentiality of personal financial data, including bank records and tax data, stored on the State House computer system in violation of this policy.
 - 5.2.1.2. The State House IT department cannot guarantee either the integrity or confidentiality of personal data for which the user has a legal duty of confidentiality. This includes documents from a member's regular employment as an attorney, health care provider, or other licensed professional.
 - 5.2.1.3. The State House IT department cannot guarantee that software licenses or digital rights management (DRM) components of purchased software, music, or video files stored on the State House computer system in violation of this policy will not become lost or corrupted.

5.2.1.4. The State House IT department may be required to release personal data files stored on the State House computer system in violation of this policy under a freedom of information inquiry.

5.2.2. The State House IT department is not responsible for the loss, corruption, or public release of personal data stored in violation of this policy, or for any resulting personal financial loss, release of private information, or other consequences.

~~5.3.~~ Document Retention

5.3.1. Email is purged from the system 90 days after receipt. See the major section on Email, below, for more information about email retention policies.

6. Software

6.1. Supported Software Suite

- 6.1.1. All State House computer system workstations operate under the Microsoft Windows environment.
- 6.1.2. All State House computer system workstations are provided with a standard software suite. The standard software suite is considered complete for members of the legislature and staff to perform their job duties, and is fully supported by the State House IT department.
- 6.1.3. Where required for a user's specific job duties, a number of minor applications programs may be installed.
- 6.1.4. See Appendix A for details of the currently supported software suite and minor applications.

6.2. Third-party Software

- 6.2.1. The IT department will purchase and install software other than the supported suite ("third-party software") upon a user's workstation upon the request of his or her department head if required for performance of the user's job duties.
- 6.2.2. Third-party software will have only limited support from the IT department.
- 6.2.3. Requests for third-party software should be made early in the appropriation process to ensure that funding will be provided in the IT budget. When this is not possible, funding for the software will come from the department's budget.
- 6.2.4. A department may request that third-party software be considered for addition to the supported software suite.
- 6.2.5. Requests for additions to the supported software suite should be made early in the appropriation process to ensure that funding will be provided in the IT budget, and to provide sufficient time for planning and installation.
- 6.2.6. The budget for additions to the supported software suite should include funds for technical support, training for the IT staff, and user training. If the third-party application is large and complex, it may be necessary to include funding for consultants or additional staff.

6.3. Personally owned software

- 6.3.1. Personally owned software is not permitted on any State House computer system workstation or server.
- 6.3.2. Software required for performance of job duties should be purchased by the user's department, or by the IT department, as provided under "Third-Party Software".

- 6.3.3. Software which is not required for job performance will not be installed or supported. This includes entertainment software, personal finance and tax preparation software, digital camera and photo maintenance software, etc.
- 6.3.4. Unauthorized software installed on State House workstations may be removed without warning.

6.4. Upgrades

- 6.4.1. It is the general policy of the Vermont State House Information Technology department to maintain all software at current release levels, unless the current release is known to contain bugs or to conflict with other software.
- 6.4.2. Prior to deployment, application upgrades will be tested by the IT staff, and by selected users.
- 6.4.3. Major application upgrades will be announced at least one month before the upgrade is distributed to users.
- 6.4.4. Application upgrades which significantly change the way in which users interact with the software will be implemented in a controlled process. Data conversion and format changes, if required, will be planned for and performed as part of the upgrade process. At least one month advance notice will be provided, as will user training, either by staff or by outside trainers.
- 6.4.5. Upgrades to applications will generally be done between the adjournment of a session and the 1st of December. When an upgrade must be done outside of this period, affected users will be given notice and opportunity for testing as soon as possible.

6.5. Patches

- 6.5.1. Software patches will be tested prior to application to make sure that they do not negatively affect software performance.
- 6.5.2. Patches will generally be distributed automatically after hours. In some cases, it may be necessary to do this manually, or during regular business hours.
- 6.5.3. Patches which fix security holes or contain routine bug fixes may be distributed at any time. Notice to users shall be given if it is anticipated that the patch will affect user interaction with the software.
- 6.5.4. Emergency patches (patches which repair bugs that seriously interfere with use of the software or close major security vulnerabilities) may be distributed at any time.

7. Hardware

7.1. Workstations

- 7.1.1. Workstations are considered part of the Vermont State House computer system, and are provided to the user in order for that user to perform his or her job functions.
- 7.1.2. When possible, the IT department shall be notified of new hiring plans early in the appropriations process, so that funds for additional workstations may be included in the next IT budget. When this is not possible, it may be necessary to provide the new hire with older but not obsolete equipment until the next budget cycle.
- 7.1.3. Workstations may be replaced, modified or relocated by the IT staff as needed to support the operations of the computer system as a whole.
- 7.1.4. Workstations are distributed with a standard software configuration pre-installed. At times it may become necessary to reinstall the standard software configuration. When this happens, the IT staff will attempt to preserve the user's personal environment, but we cannot guarantee that the restored machine will be in all respects the same as before.

7.2. Laptops

- 7.2.1. Laptops may be provided to a user, in support of the user's job functions, at the request of the user's department head.
- 7.2.2. When possible, laptop requests should be made early in the appropriations process, so that funds for the laptop may be included in the next IT budget. When this is not possible, funding for the laptop should come from the user's departmental budget.
- 7.2.3. Laptops are provided in addition to a user's workstation. Configurations where a laptop is used instead of a workstation are not supported.
- 7.2.4. The IT department maintains a stock of laptops that are available for short-term use. These laptops are not available for assignment to one user for an extended period.
- 7.2.5. Short-term laptop loans should be reserved through the GroupWise system to ensure availability.

7.3. Workstation Life Cycle and Disposition

- 7.3.1. Workstations are purchased with a three-year manufacturer's warranty, which provides for onsite repair if required. In general, workstations are replaced at the end of the warranty period.
- 7.3.2. Replaced workstations may be redeployed to lower-priority applications.
- 7.3.3. When a workstation is removed from service, it will be transferred to the Division of Surplus Property of the Department of General Services for re-use or disposal.

- 7.3.4. Legislative employees may reserve surplus workstations for purchase from Surplus Property for personal use, on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 7.4. Third-party hardware
 - 7.4.1. Privately owned computers may not be connected to the State House computer system through the wired State House infrastructure.
 - 7.4.2. For purposes of presentations or demonstrations, privately owned computers may be provided with a wired connection to the Internet (via GovNet). However, use of the State House wireless system is preferred.
- 7.5. Printers/Copiers
 - 7.5.1. State House printers and copiers are to be used only by legislative employees (members and staff), with the exception of equipment provided specifically for the use of the public.
 - 7.5.2. The banner page feature (where available) will be enabled or disabled for an entire office, depending on the office's preference. This feature will not be enabled on a per-person basis.
- 7.6. Projection equipment
 - 7.6.1. Projection equipment, including projectors and projector screens, will generally be set up by the assistant to the committee requesting the setup.
 - 7.6.2. For presentations not requested by a committee, projection equipment will be set up by departmental staff, by the committee staff, or by the IT department.
 - 7.6.3. Projectors should be reserved through the GroupWise system to ensure availability.

8. Email

- 8.1. The State House computer system uses Novell GroupWise for email and groupware applications (calendaring, task management, scheduling, collaboration, etc.).
- 8.2. The GroupWise email client is installed on all State House workstations, and is the primary tool for receiving, managing, and sending email.
- 8.3. The GroupWise WebAccess Web tool allows users to receive, manage, and send email from any Internet-accessible location.
- 8.4. Email, appointments, and tasks is retained for 90 days following receipt, and is then purged from the system.
- 8.5. The GroupWise environment is backed up daily for disaster recovery purposes. However, restoration of individual email messages is virtually impossible due to the structure of the GroupWise database.
- 8.6. Bulk Commercial Email (“Spam”)
 - 8.6.1. The Vermont State House email system uses an automated system to scan for and quarantine bulk commercial email, often called “spam”. Note: Over 600,000 email messages are received at the Vermont State House each month. Over 90% are quarantined or deleted.
 - 8.6.2. The automated system examines each incoming email message for characteristics of spam and assigns each message a score. The higher the score, the more likely the message is to be spam.
 - 8.6.2.1. Email messages which score less than 100 points are delivered to the user’s mailbox.
 - 8.6.2.2. Email messages which score more than 100 points are marked as “Probable Spam” and delivered to the user’s mailbox.
 - 8.6.2.3. Email messages which score more than 300 points and less than 1000 points are quarantined.
 - 8.6.2.4. Email messages which score higher than 1000 are discarded.
 - 8.6.3. Users can access their spam quarantine, both from the Vermont State House and elsewhere, via the Internet. The user may view the message, delete it, release it to their mailbox, and instruct the system to automatically pass or block future messages from the same source.
 - 8.6.4. Quarantined messages are held for one week, and are then discarded.
 - 8.6.5. The automated system is not foolproof. It can and does quarantine legitimate messages (“false positives”). It also passes some spam messages through to the user.
 - 8.6.6. The IT staff will provide training in accessing and managing quarantined mail to any user upon request.
- 8.7. Bulk Non-Commercial Email Policy (Approved by Joint Rules, 2/2/2006)

- 8.7.1. Bulk non-commercial email is defined as identical or nearly identically worded email messages sent to a group of fifty or more legislators from or through a single source or based on a single template.
- 8.7.2. In the event that this group of legislators receives more than one hundred messages each per day from this source, the State House IT staff will monitor email performance for a 48 hours period before taking action.
- 8.7.3. If the number of incoming messages stays constant or increases, the State House IT staff will set the system to quarantine future bulk messages from this source. Quarantined messages are retained for one week, during which individual members may review, release, or delete messages as desired.
- 8.7.4. When the decision is made to begin quarantining messages, the State House IT staff will send a message to all users advising them of this action and describing how to access the email quarantine.
- 8.7.5. If the number of messages received per user exceeds two hundred per day, the State House IT staff will begin quarantining messages immediately.

9. Support

9.1. Workstation Support

- 9.1.1. The State House IT staff will maintain all State House computer system hardware in essentially new condition, other than cosmetic issues. When required, maintenance and repair services from the vendor will be sought under warranty or under a paid service agreement.
- 9.1.2. The State House IT staff will make their best efforts to service hardware in a timely manner. However, limited support resources require that support requests be prioritized, with the most critical problems attended to first.
- 9.1.3. Some service requests will require procurement of replacement parts from the vendor or from a third party, which may take up to several days.
- 9.1.4. When a workstation will be unusable for an extended period of time, a replacement machine may be supplied temporarily. This machine will not necessarily be identical to the failed unit in size, power, or functionality.
- 9.1.5. Modifications of State House computer equipment by users is not permitted.

9.2. Printer Support

- 9.2.1. Users are expected to perform minor printer maintenance, such as clearing minor jams and refilling paper supplies, on their own. Training in jam clearance procedures, etc. will be supplied upon request.
- 9.2.2. More severe printer problems will require maintenance by the Copy Room operator and the IT staff. When needed, maintenance and repair services from the vendor will be sought under warranty or under a paid service agreement.
- 9.2.3. When printers suffer frequent jamming and other chronic issues, the IT Staff will place a request for major maintenance from the printer vendor. If the vendor is unable to restore the machine to useable condition, replacement of the machine under the Total Satisfaction Guarantee process will be requested.
- 9.2.4. Printers are generally replaced after five years in service, although this will depend on printer performance, user demand on the printer, vendor support policies, etc.

9.3. Personal Digital Assistants, Smart Phones, and Other Devices

- 9.3.1. The Vermont Legislature has not adopted a standard for personal digital assistants (PDAs), smart phones, or other devices. Support for this technology is limited.
- 9.3.2. The State House IT staff will set up a wireless-enabled PDA for access to the State House wireless system upon request.

- 9.3.3. Legislative employees who are assigned a workstation for exclusive use may request that their PDA synchronization software be installed on their workstation. These requests will be handled on a time-available basis.
 - 9.3.4. PDA synchronization software will not be installed on shared workstations. Legislative employees who do not have a workstation assigned for exclusive use will not be able to synchronize PDAs.
 - 9.3.5. The State House IT staff has tested synchronization software for Palm OS-equipped machines and for Windows CE-equipped machines. However, variations in equipment age and type are significant enough that we cannot guarantee that all machine configurations can be supported.
- 9.4. Software Support
- 9.4.1. The State House IT staff will maintain the supported software suite, ensuring that patches and bug fixes are applied, such that all features of the software are available.
 - 9.4.2. Under certain circumstances, certain advanced features of supported software may conflict with other applications in the software suite. When the features in question are critical to legislative operations, the staff will work to resolve the conflicts or develop a workaround.
 - 9.4.3. Commercial software applications are purchased “off-the-shelf”, and configured to incorporate the software’s features into the legislative process. In most cases, the IT staff cannot modify the software’s behavior beyond that point.
 - 9.4.4. There are a number of known issues with each software package. When a known issue impacts legislative usage, the IT staff will notify the affected users and attempt to develop a workaround. The staff will track the problem with the vendor’s support services, and test and implement a solution if and when one becomes available.
- 9.5. Training
- 9.5.1. The State House IT staff will provide users with training to allow them to become productive in using the supported software suite to perform legislative work. This training may take the form of formal classroom training with contracted trainers, online courseware, printed manuals, reference books, one-on-one coaching, and other formats.
 - 9.5.2. Basic training in using the support software suite will be provided to all new hires, newly elected member, and others upon request.
 - 9.5.3. Advanced training will usually be provided by an outside vendor at an offsite location. If sufficient numbers of users need the same course, a custom class can be considered.
 - 9.5.4. Occasional training in special features may be conducted by the State House IT Staff.

9.6. User Support

- 9.6.1. The State House IT staff will provide users with assistance in using the supported software suite to perform legislative work. This assistance may include classroom or other formal training as described above, one-on-one coaching, troubleshooting, problem resolution, and technical assistance.
- 9.6.2. The State House IT staff support services are designed to assist the user in performing legislative work. The State House IT staff will show the user how to do the work in question, but will not perform the work for the user.
- 9.6.3. Assistance will be provided to users in accessing outside email and other online services. Such assistance will be limited to providing a trouble-free connection to the online site. Assistance with using the features of the site will not be provided.

9.7. Support of Personally Owned Equipment

- 9.7.1. A limited amount of support will be provided for personally owned laptop computers used in support of legislative business.
- 9.7.2. The State House IT staff will configure laptop computers to access the State House wireless system. Some laptops may have security software installed by other support services; we cannot guarantee that configuring a laptop for wireless access will not conflict with the other use of the system.
- 9.7.3. The State House IT staff cannot support Windows versions older than Windows 2000 or Macintosh versions older than OS X.
- 9.7.4. The State House IT staff cannot troubleshoot a member's connection to their home or office Internet service, or to a member's personal or office email system.
- 9.7.5. The State House IT staff will do a limited amount of hardware troubleshooting on a personally owned laptop, sufficient to provide a general assessment of the problem. However, the State House IT staff is not responsible for providing a resolution to the problem; the user should contact the product vendor for support.

9.8. Support of Personally Owned Equipment (Approved 8/5/1999 by Bill Russell)

- 9.8.1. The State House IT staff will not provide MS Word, or any other software owned or licensed by the Legislative Council, for installation on personal computers owned by staff or members (except for computers jointly owned by the staff and the Council). Software is specifically licensed to the Council for use on the State House computer system and any other usage violates the license agreements as well as applicable State and Federal laws.
- 9.8.2. The State House IT staff will not maintain personally owned computers owned by staff or members (except for the laptop computers jointly owned by the staff and the Council). This includes installation of personally owned or licensed software, troubleshooting, ~~Y2K testing~~, or any other activities intended to support personal use of this equipment.

- 9.8.3. The State House IT staff will, on request, configure computers personally owned by members or staff to dial into the GovNet network to access the State House email system and the Legislative Web site. The computer equipment must be brought by the owner to the State House, and the work will be performed as time allows.
- 9.8.4. The State House IT staff will maintain computers which, while owned by the Council, have been located at a private residence in support of Legislative operations. When possible, the user will bring the computer into the State House for maintenance. Site visits will only be performed when absolutely necessary.

APPENDIX A
STANDARD SOFTWARE SUITE
As of December, 2009

1. The standard workstation operating system is Windows XP.
2. The supported software suite for a workstation includes
 - 2.1. Microsoft Office 2003 Professional Edition,
 - 2.2. the Hummingbird DM (document management) client,
 - 2.3. the Novell GroupWise email client
 - 2.4. the Vermont Legislative Information database application.
 - 2.5. the Systems Management client
3. The supported utilities suite for a workstation includes
 - 3.1. Microsoft Internet Explorer, and Mozilla Firefox,
 - 3.2. the Macromedia Flash and Shockwave browser plug-ins
 - 3.3. Trend Micro OfficeScan
 - 3.4. Windows Media Player, Quicktime, and RealPlayer Alternative
 - 3.5. Acrobat Reader,
 - 3.6. the Java client,
 - 3.7. IZarc
 - 3.8. the workstation's native CD burning software and DVD decoder.
4. Where required for a user's job duties, the following minor applications may be installed
 - 4.1. WS_FTP
 - 4.2. the GoToMyPC host
 - 4.3. the Meribah client
 - 4.4. the FrontPage or SharePoint Developer Web tools
 - 4.5. Microsoft Visio
 - 4.6. SnagIT

APPENDIX B
THE STATE HOUSE WIRELESS SYSTEM

1. The State House Wireless System

- 1.1. The Vermont State House wireless computer access system is operated by an outside vendor, Summit Technologies of Burlington, Vermont.
 - 1.1.1. The Summit system is available only within the Vermont State House and at specific other locations operated by Summit or its affiliates (eg: Vermont Interstate rest areas).
 - 1.1.2. The Summit system is entirely separate from the Vermont State House computer system, and from the state government wide-area network (“GovNet”).
 - 1.1.3. The Summit system may be used by anyone, including members, staff, and the public.
 - 1.1.4. The Summit system provides generic Internet access only.
- 1.2. Access to the State House wireless system page is free for all users of the Summit system.
- 1.3. Legislative users of the Summit system may print from the wireless system to several State House printers. Users must contact the IT department to be set up for wireless printing.
- 1.4. Legislative staff and members’ use of their Summit wireless subscriptions is subject to the same appropriate use policies as for the State House computer system.

APPENDIX C

THE LEGISLATIVE WEB SITE

1. The primary tool for providing public access to legislative information is the Vermont Legislative Web site.
2. The existing Legislative Web site provides access to a variety of standard legislative documents, including bills, resolutions, calendars, journals, and acts. It also provides access to the reporting functions of the Legislative Information Database, including the bill status reports, meeting schedule and history reports. And the Legislative Directory. This information is routinely posted through a variety of automated systems.
 - 2.1. Legislative documents are posted when available, by the staffs of the various offices in which they are created.
 - 2.2. Meeting agendas are posted for standing committees, joint committees, and study committees.
 - 2.2.1. During the session, standing committee agendas are published for the current week only. Outside of the session, standing committee agendas are published when scheduled.
 - 2.2.2. Public hearing agendas and study committee agendas are published when scheduled.
3. The online Legislative Directory lists each member of the Vermont House and Senate, together with party identifier, district represented, home and work addresses and telephone numbers, etc.
 - 3.1. A member's State House email address is only posted if the member has specifically authorized the release of this information. (per the Joint Rules Committee.)
4. Nonstandard legislative documents, including working drafts, reports, minutes, press releases, job postings, memoranda, supporting documentation, etc., must be manually processed, and are posted only upon request.
 - 4.1. Placement of nonstandard documents varies. The Web site contains standard pages to contain minutes, reports, and certain other documents. Other documents (especially time-limited documents such as job postings and press releases) are posted on the main page under "Highlights" and are removed after a period of time.
 - 4.2. Standard documents are generally posted in both HTML format (as Web pages) and in their native document format (.DOC, .XLS, etc.)
 - 4.3. Nonstandard documents with relatively simple page layouts are generally posted in HTML format. However, the automated tools for converting documents to HTML do not always produce an accurate representation of more

complicated documents. If the HTML representation is not suitable, the document may be posted in Adobe Page Description Format (PDF).

- 4.4. Posting of nonstandard documents is done on a time-available basis.
5. Legislative standing committees, study committees, commissions, task forces, and other nonpartisan legislative groups may request the creation of a Web page to provide public information relating to the mission of the group.
 - 5.1. Committee Web pages are a new innovation on the Vermont Legislative Web site and are still somewhat experimental.
 - 5.2. Committee Web pages follow a standard format. Links may be created to documents stored in the Committee's directory on the Legislative Web site, to other documents stored on the Web site, and to documents stored elsewhere.
 - 5.3. Committee Web pages will be maintained by the committee clerical and/or legal staff, using simplified tools provided by the IT department. The staff in question must have the technical ability to maintain the page using those tools.
 - 5.4. Requests for committee pages must come from the chair of the committee, if the chair is a legislator.
 - 5.5. A committee which includes one or more legislators as members, but not as chair, may not have enough of a connection to legislative business to justify a legislative Web page. Creation of a Web page will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - 5.6. A disclaimer similar to the following will be placed at the top of all committee pages:

“Links on this page are provided for information purposes only and do not necessarily constitute endorsement by the committee or the Vermont Legislature”

This above summary should link to the following more complete disclaimer:

“This page contains links to documents and Web sites containing information related to the mission of this committee. Linked documents may be located on the Vermont Legislative Web site, other governmental Web sites, sites maintained by non-governmental organizations, commercial and nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, party caucuses, and other organizations, and may include committee minutes and deliberations, draft and actual legislation, research reports, news articles, opinion pieces, correspondence, memoranda, and other documents. Links to these documents are provided for information purposes and do not necessarily constitute endorsement by the committee or by the Vermont Legislature.”

6. Development resources are limited. Development of new Web features will be done on a time-available basis.

- 6.1. Requests for new Web features must be requested early in the budget cycle to provide adequate time for planning, development of budgets, approval, funding, etc.
- 6.1.1. We cannot guarantee that any particular feature or technology will be practical to implement on the Vermont Legislative Web site due to technical limitations, support resources, licensing costs, etc.
- 6.1.2. Requests for major new Web features which will require substantial investments in software, hardware, development resources, etc., should be brought to the Legislative Information Technology Committee for consideration.