



SECURE INTERNET BROWSING AND EMAIL SERVICE

ADVICE TO SCHOOLS

On 19 November 2005, Federation Council lifted the long standing ban on Webservices. In doing so, Council congratulated all members who so strongly supported the ban.

Over the period of the ban, the Federation continued to press the DET and the government about the issues surrounding Webservices. The decision to lift the ban only occurred after a number of commitments were made by the DET.

DET Commitments

A. What is the service?

1. Webservices, as we know it, has been abandoned. It is not to be rolled out to any additional schools after the end of Term 4, 2005.

In Term 4, the only schools in which it was to be implemented were those already scheduled to receive it.

2. Webservices is being replaced by a secure internet browsing and email service and it is this service that will be installed and implemented from the beginning of this year.
3. Staff and students will only be able to access the internet via the DET Portal using the log-on and password that will be issued to them.
4. Internet access will be filtered for individual year groups. Individual sites can be blocked by the school or the IT Help Desk. Sites that are blocked, but are appropriate for a particular group, can be unblocked.

B. Protocols

1. There is no requirement by the DET nor at the school/college level, for teachers to engage in email communication with staff, students or parents/caregivers.
2. Within the DET portal, there will be an option for staff to disable their email account.
3. For those teachers who choose to use their email account, there is no requirement to access or use it outside of school/college hours.
4. The DET will ensure that teachers are aware that email communications with students or parents/caregivers occur in the context of existing professional teacher student/parent relationships and that such communications are considered official school communications which may form part of official school records.
5. The DET will distribute these protocols to all schools.
6. The DET will develop an appropriate communication for distribution to the school community that will clarify what expectations parents should have in relation to teachers responding to emails.

C. Global Address Lists

1. In early 2006, teachers will be able to change the name that appears on the Global Address List and their email address to a preferred name within the DET's naming conventions. The process for this will be clearly communicated to schools and teachers.
2. Teachers who choose not to use email and disable their account through the DET Portal will not appear on the Global Address List.

D. Misuse of Electronic Communications

The DET'S "Good Discipline and Effective Learning Policy" and "Acceptable Usage Policy" will be revised.

E. Cyber-Bullying

1. The DET will refer to cyber-bullying in its draft bullying policy.
2. The DET will continue discussions with the Federation about strategies to deal with cyber bullying. (**Note** : while some discussions have occurred, the DET is dragging its heels in relation to this. See the later section on Federation advice).

F. Training

1. The DET will run training sessions for a core group of staff at each school.
2. Funding for training will be available through the funds previously sent to all schools for training for Webservices.

G. Technology Support

1. The DET acknowledges that it is not the role of teachers, including computer coordinators, to provide technical support.
2. The DET will, where possible, expedite the appointment of 129 new technology support staff. The majority were to have been appointed by the end of 2005 and the remainder by the beginning of July 2006.
3. The installation of new computers is now included in the purchase price.
4. New computers come with a standard operating environment that includes automatic virus and security updates.
5. Remote support is being set up for all school computers that have the remote support capabilities.
6. The T4L computers come with 4 year on site warranty and the support agreement with vendors includes an onsite visit within 48 hours of the warranty repair being logged.

H. Review

The DET and the Federation will meet early in Term 3, 2006 to review the implementation and discuss issues arising from the implementation and its impact on staff.

Federation Advice to Teachers

Q1 Am I required to have a DET email account?

No. The DET has stated quite clearly that no teacher is required to have an email account, nor are they required to access or use email during school hours or outside school hours.

Q2 Will I be required to have a DET password to access the internet and the email service?

Yes. However, you may choose to only use your password to access the internet and not to access the email service as well. You will be issued with a log on and password, as will students. The only way you will be able to use the internet will be via the DET Portal using that log on and password.

Q3 Will the DET automatically allocated an email address and account to me?

Yes. However, no teacher is required to use either. Teachers will have an opportunity to disable their email account when they log onto a DET computer for the first time using their DET allocated password.

Q4 If I disable my email account now, will I be able to activate it at a later date?

Yes. It is possible to activate your account at a time of your choosing.

Q5 If I choose to disable my email account, will my email address be placed on any list available to other teachers and students?

No.

Q6 Can I continue to use email services provided by Hotmail, Google, Yahoo and similar providers?

While you will still be able to receive emails sent via these services, you will not be able to send emails from DET computers using these services.

Q7 If I use the email service, will my email be confidential?

No. All transactions that take place through the new system will be logged and archived. The DET has the right and capacity (within the terms of NSW legislation on workplace surveillance) to monitor and archive all emails involving students, parents, colleagues or anyone else, transmitted to or from DET equipment. Teachers should always behave in the appropriate professional manner when communicating by email and never assume that the contents of emails are not available to the DET.

Teachers need to be aware that deleting an email does not mean that a record of it is not available to the DET.

Q8 Can the DET monitor my use of the internet?

Yes. The DET has the capacity to track the history of your internet use, including all websites visited.

Q9 Will the DET inform me about these protocols?

Yes. The DET will distribute the protocols to all schools.

Q10 Will parents expect me to respond to their emails?

Not necessarily. The DET is developing a communication for schools to distribute to the school community that will clarify what expectations they should have.

Q11 Can I change the name that appears on my email address and the Global Address List to a preferred name?

Yes. The process for doing this will be available in early 2006 and will be clearly communicated to schools, although any new address will have to be within parameters set by the DET.

Q.12 Will students automatically have access to my DET email address?

No. A decision will be made at the school as to student access. However, members should note that because email addresses will have a common format, it may be possible for students and others to guess a teacher's email address. This possibility is more likely if the teacher has an uncommon name.

Q.13 Will teachers at my school and other schools have access to my email address?

Yes, but only if you do not disable your account. The DET will include your email address in a global address book available to other DET employees across the state.

Q14 Will I be trained to use the DET Portal?

A core group in each school will be trained. Training is to be funded from the Webservices training funds the DET lodged in schools' bank accounts last year.

Q15 Is any member required to assume additional responsibilities and/or workload to facilitate the introduction and/or operation of the new email system?

No. The November 2005 decision of the Council of the Federation resolved that:

- a. *The Federation will seek the assistance of Fed Reps to ensure that workload implication particularly associated with provision of passwords and mailbox capacity, is carefully monitored.*
- b. *In providing advice and collaboratively monitoring workloads, Federation asserts its confidence in the professional judgment of teachers and reaffirms its commitment to supporting any member, or group of members who exercise their discretion to effectively manage their engagement with technological initiatives in their workplace.*

The Federation has concerns about the potential workload implications of the use of email and continues to regard the current level of technology support to schools as inadequate.

Any member who believes that an unreasonable demand or workload is being imposed upon them as a result of any aspect of the introduction of the new email and internet service should contact their Federation organiser.

The Federation and the DET will be meeting early in Term 3, 2006 to review the roll-out and its impact on teachers.

However, the Federation will take up issues with the DET before then if the need arises.

Q16 What do I do if I need technical support?

The DET has said that technical support is not the role of teachers, including computer coordinators. It isn't yet clear how schools will access the different sorts of support : technology support staff, remote support or support through an on site warranty. The Federation will continue discussions with the DET about this.

Q17 What should I do if I am the victim of cyber-harassment?

The Federation and the DET have been discussing this for some time. In particular the Federation wants clear procedures that delineate responsibilities and action that must be taken. Some of this requires changes to various DET policies. The DET response this year has been tardy.

Until such procedures and policy reviews are finalised, the Federation strongly advises teachers to formally report incidents to the principal, and to seek further advice from the Federation organiser

Q18 What should I do if inappropriate material appears, through whatever means, on my email or during internet use?

There are a number of ways that this can happen to teachers innocently accessing the internet.

The Federation advises teachers to report such occurrences immediately to the Principal and to keep a record.