



CHAPTER 20

Information and Communication Technology

Author:
Matthew Smith

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Catholic perspectives on Technology and the Internet

The broad gamut of Catholic teaching appreciates both the benefits and limitations of technology and the internet. Within the broad context of science, the *Catechism* describes technology and basic scientific research as precious resources when placed at the service of humanity and when designed to promote its integral development for the benefit of all. By themselves however, science and technology cannot disclose the meaning of existence and of human progress. Science and technology are ordered to humanity from whom they take their origin and development; hence they find in the person and in their moral values both evidence of their purpose and awareness of their limits (1).

The document *The Church and the Internet* describes the media and the internet in particular as ‘gifts of God’ (2) which help humanity to cooperate with God’s plan for their salvation. The great blessing of the internet is that it helps bring about ‘revolutionary changes in commerce, education, politics, journalism, the relationship of nation to nation and culture to culture – changes not just in how people communicate but how they understand their lives’ (3). The Church’s desire for communication using vehicles such as the internet reflects its firm belief that ‘the Church herself is a *communio*, a communion of the Trinity, communication therefore is of the essence of the Church. This more than any other reason is why “the Church’s practice of communication should be exemplary, reflecting the highest standards of truthfulness, accountability, sensitivity to human rights, and other relevant principles and norms”’ (4).

‘Communication in and by the Church’, it should always be remembered, ‘is essentially communication of the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is the proclamation of the Gospel as prophetic, liberating words to men and women of our times; it is testimony, in the face of radical secularisation, to divine truth and to the transcendent destiny of the human person; it is witness given in solidarity with all believers against conflict and division, to justice and communion among peoples, nations, and cultures’ (5).

As Pope Benedict XVI exhorts us: ‘The world of digital communication, with its almost limitless capacity, makes us appreciate all the more Saint Paul’s exclamation: “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel” (1 Cor 9:16)’ (6). Elsewhere in his speeches and writings, Pope Benedict encourages Catholic educators and teachers (indeed all the faithful) to use vehicles of communication to promote a culture of respect for the dignity and value of the human person (7), to use them to cultivate a culture of dialogue and friendship (8), to choose service and the search for truth over the cult of self-promotion (9), and to realise that the media and internet represent both a risk and a richness (10), that nevertheless at all times should be used for the nurturing of communion and cooperation (11).

Therefore, to sum up the roles of the new media with particular reference to the internet, these represent powerful tools for education and cultural enrichment, for commercial activity and political participation, for intercultural dialogue and understanding. As educational tools they can also serve the cause of religion. ‘Yet this coin has another side. Media of communication that can be used for the good of persons and communities can be used to exploit, manipulate, dominate and corrupt’ (12). The internet in particular can also be used in such a way that: ‘the dangers of limiting oneself to play, of wasting time, of flight from reality and remaining on the surface of things, are there’ (13) and that can lead unconsciously to the symptoms of ‘nature deficit disorder’ in children (14).

It is the role and responsibility of all Catholic educators to ensure that the internet remains a vehicle that bestows the ‘gifts of God’ on its users, that ‘communicates the Good News of Jesus Christ’, and is employed in the teaching and learning of students as a valuable tool that is life-giving and hopeful and not life-denying and limiting.

Endnotes and References

- (1) The Holy See. (1994). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Homebush: St Pauls, n. 2293.
- (2) Pontifical Council for Social Communications. (2002). *The Church and the Internet*. Rome: The Holy See, 22 February 2002, nn.1.
- (3) Ibid, n.2.
- (4) Ibid, n.3.
- (5) Ibid, n.5.
- (6) Pope Benedict XVI. (2010). *Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the 44th World Communications Day*. Rome: The Holy See, 16 May 2010, page 1.
- (7) Ibid, page 2.
- (8) Pope Benedict XVI. (2009). *Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the 43rd World Communications Day*. Rome: The Holy See, 24 May 2009, page 1.
- (9) Pope Benedict XVI. (2008). *Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the 42nd World Communications Day*. Rome: The Holy See, 4 May 2008, page 1.
- (10) Pope John Paul II. (2004). *Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the 38th World Communications Day*. Rome: The Holy See, 23 May 2004, page 1.
- (11) Pope Benedict XVI. (2006). *Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the 40th World Communications Day*. Rome: The Holy See, 28 May 2006, page 1.
- (12) Pontifical Council for Social Communications. (2002). *Ethics in Internet*. Rome: The Holy See, 22 February 2002, n.1.
- (13) Father Federico Lombardi, (2009). Aide Notes Danger of Wasting Time with Technology. *ZENIT*. 24 May 2009. Rome: The Holy See, page 1. Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi is the director of the Vatican press office, and was commenting on the Pope's 2009 Message for the World Day of Social Communication.
- (14) 'Nature Deficit Disorder' (NDD) is also referred to in the literature as 'Environmental Deficit Disorder' (EDD). 'Nature Deficit Disorder' is a term first coined by 2008 Audubon Medal recipient Richard Louv in his 2005 national bestseller: *Last Child in the Woods, Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 336 pp. The book explores the disconnection between children and nature and argues that children need nature as much as nature needs children. In his book, Louv links the lack of contact with nature in the lives of today's wired generation (involved in an excessive use of technology and prolonged time indoors) to some of the most disturbing childhood trends, such as the rises in obesity, attention disorders, and depression. *Last Child in the Woods* is the first book to bring together a new and growing body of research indicating that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical and emotional health of both children and adults. More than just raising an alarm, Louv offers practical solutions and simple ways to heal the broken bond – and many of these are available right in our own backyard or neighbourhood. The latest edition of his book highlights: 100 actions you can take to create change in your community, school and family; 35 discussion points to inspire people of all ages to talk about the importance of nature in their lives; a new progress report by the author about the growing Leave No Child inside movement; new and updated research confirming that direct exposure to nature is developing the full potential of all children and adults.

Some key web site references, all retrieved on 1 September 2010, are:

Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: <http://www.amazon.com/Last-Child-Woods-Children-Nature-Deficit/dp/1565123913>

Environment Deficit Disorder:

http://scienceblogs.com/tomorrowstable/2010/07/environmental_deficit_disorder.php

Children and Nature Network: <http://www.childrenandnature.org/>

On the Need for Play – Selected Excerpts and Quotes:

[http://commongood.org/assets/attachments/VoP --
Selected Quotes and Excerpts.pdf](http://commongood.org/assets/attachments/VoP-_Selected_Quotes_and_Excerpts.pdf)

Powell's Books book review:

[http://www.powells.com/biblio?show=HARDCOVER:USED:9781565123915:14.95#synopses and reviews](http://www.powells.com/biblio?show=HARDCOVER:USED:9781565123915:14.95#synopses_and_reviews) and

An Interview with Richard Louv: <http://www.grist.org/article/louv/>

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20.1 Overview

With the increase in the use and focus of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in schools and the Catholic Education Office, it is essential that staff are aware of the following policy which covers the appropriate use of the ICT services and equipment that is provided by the Diocese.

ICT in Schools:

- Computers are a learning tool accessible to children from the day they commence school and form an integral part of each school's teaching program.
- All hardware and software purchased reflects the school's educational aims and the needs of the children. ICT purchases are to be discussed with the ICT teacher.
- Schools are required to formulate a computer finance policy which takes into account the budgetary requirements associated with the regular replacement of IT equipment.
- Parents are to be kept informed about developments with respect to 'computers in education' and are encouraged to assist in the development of the school's computer finance policy.
- Teachers are comfortable and competent in using a range of digital technologies as a tool for complementing student learning.
- Staff will be required to sign a statement to the effect that they have sighted and understood the Catholic Education Office ITC policy.

20.2 ICT – Acceptable Use Policy

The Diocese provides ICT systems to improve and enhance learning and teaching, and to facilitate the business functions of the Diocese.

The Diocese manages staff use of Diocesan ICT systems through the implementation of this Policy. The Policy must be followed whenever using Diocesan ICT systems.

20.2.1 Scope

a) In this policy:

- Diocese or Diocesan refers to the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes.
- Diocesan ICT systems, refers to the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes Catholic Education Office and School ICT Systems.

- “Electronic communications” means email, instant messaging and any other material sent electronically;
 - “Personal use” means all non-work related use, and includes Internet usage and private emails.
 - “Users” of Diocesan ICT systems includes all employees (including permanent, casual and temporary employees), contractors, school councils and volunteers.
 - For school staff, an “Authorized Person” is the Director of Schools or the School Principal.
 - For the Catholic Education Office the “Authorized Person” is the Director of Schools.
- b) This Policy applies to all users of Diocesan ICT systems regardless of the location from which they access the systems.
- c) Use of Diocesan ICT systems includes transmissions to or through Diocesan ICT systems by a user.
- d) This Policy governs the use of Diocesan ICT systems and includes but is not limited to:
- Publishing and browsing on the Internet (including Intranet and Extranet)
 - Downloading or accessing files from the Internet or other electronic sources
 - Email
 - Electronic bulletins/notice boards
 - Electronic discussion/news groups
 - Weblogs (‘blogs’)
 - File transfer
 - File storage
 - File sharing
 - Video conferencing
 - Streaming media
 - Instant messaging
 - Online discussion groups and ‘chat’ facilities
 - Subscriptions to list servers, mailing lists or other like services
 - Copying, saving or distributing files
 - Viewing material electronically; and
 - Printing material

20.2.2 Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Director of Schools, Team Leaders and Principals to ensure that users of Diocesan and school ICT systems are aware of this policy. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Providing access to a copy of the policy
- Reminders of the need for compliance with the policy, and
- Providing updates of policy developments

It is the responsibility of all users affected by the policy to abide by it.

20.2.3 Non-compliance

Depending on the nature of the inappropriate use of Diocesan ICT systems, non-compliance with this Policy may constitute:

- A breach of employment obligations
- serious misconduct
- sexual harassment
- unlawful discrimination
- a criminal offence
- a threat to the security of Diocesan ICT systems
- an infringement of the privacy of staff and other persons, or
- exposure to legal liability.

Non-compliance with this Policy will be regarded as a serious matter and appropriate action, including termination of employment, may be taken.

Where there is a reasonable belief that illegal activity may have occurred the Diocese will report the suspected illegal activity to the police.

20.2.4 Business purposes

The Diocesan ICT systems are tools to be used for Diocesan purposes.

a) Use of Diocesan ICT systems must:

- Be for Diocesan purposes only or where required by law, or with the express permission of an Authorised Person.
- Be used like other business communications and comply with any legislative requirements that apply to the user.

b) Subject to limited personal use in accordance with clauses 20.2.5:

- Subscribing to list servers (LISTSERVS), mailing lists and other like services must be for Diocesan purposes or professional development reasons only, and
 - Online conferences, discussion groups or other like services must be relevant and used for Diocesan purposes or professional development activities. Such interaction requires that internet etiquette should be observed along with current societal standards for respect and fairness.
- c) Large downloads or transmissions should be minimised to ensure the performance of Diocesan ICT systems for other users is not adversely affected. Where a user has caused the Diocese to incur costs for excessive downloading of non-work related material in breach of this policy, the Diocese may seek reimbursement or compensation from the user for all or part of these costs.

20.2.5 Personal and Union Purposes

Notwithstanding clause 20.2.4a, users of Diocesan ICT systems may use Diocesan ICT systems for personal use provided:

- Users must not engage in excessive personal use of Diocesan ICT systems during working hours.
- Users must not engage in excessive personal use of electronic communications and the internet using Diocesan networks outside working hours.
- Excessive use is defined as that which has negatively impacted on the Users role, such as failure to complete tasks in a timely manner or meet other reasonable expectations of a supervisor.
- Diocesan ICT systems are not to be used for illegal purposes.

20.2.6 Diocesan Property

The Diocese is the owner of, and asserts copyright over, all electronic communications created by employees as part of their employment and sent through Diocesan ICT systems.

Electronic communications created, sent or received by users are the property of the Diocese, and may be accessed as records of evidence in the case of an investigation. Electronic communications may also be subject to discovery in litigation and criminal investigations. Please note that email messages may be retrieved from back-up systems.

20.2.7 Monitoring

Use of Diocesan ICT systems may be monitored by Authorised Persons.

- a) From time to time, Authorised Persons may examine or monitor the records of Diocesan ICT systems for operational, maintenance, compliance, auditing, security or investigative purposes. For example, electronic communications and web sites visited may be monitored. The Diocese may investigate a complaint arising from the use of Diocesan ICT systems.
- b) The use of Diocesan ICT systems is provided to users on condition that it is agreed that Diocesan ICT systems are monitored in accordance with this Policy. Use of Diocesan ICT systems constitutes consent to monitoring in accordance with this Policy.
- c) If at any time there is a reasonable belief that Diocesan ICT systems are being used in breach of this Policy, the Director of Schools or the school principal may suspend a person's use of Diocesan ICT systems and may require that the equipment being used by the person be while the suspected breach is being investigated.

20.2.8 Defamation

Diocesan ICT systems must not be used to send material that defames an individual, organisation, association, company or business. The consequences of a defamatory comment may be severe and give rise to personal and/or Diocesan liability. Electronic communications may be easily copied, forwarded, saved, intercepted or archived. The audience of an electronic message may be unexpected and widespread.

20.2.9 Copyright Infringement

The exponential growth of easily accessible copyrighted content in digital form on the internet has made it far easier to commit breaches of copyright than in the past. This places a growing pressure on the Diocese in terms of compliance management costs and copyright fees.

- a) It is the responsibility of all staff at all times to be compliant with relevant copyright issues. As such all users of Diocesan ICT systems should ensure they are familiar with their responsibilities as detailed on the Smartcopying Website: www.smartcopying.edu.au
- b) The copyright material of third parties (for example, software, database files, documentation, cartoons, articles, graphic files, music files, video

files, text and down loaded information) must not be used without specific authorisation to do so. Copying material to a hard disk or removable disk, printing or distributing or sharing copyright material by electronic means, may give rise to personal and/or Diocesan liability, despite the belief that the use of such material was permitted.

- c) The Diocese supports the rights of copyright.

20.2.10 Illegal material

- a) Diocesan ICT systems must not be used in any manner contrary to law or likely to contravene the law. Any suspected offender will be referred to the police or other relevant authority and their employment may be terminated.
- b) Illegal or unlawful use includes but is not limited to:
- certain types of pornography
 - defamatory material
 - material that could constitute racial or religious vilification
 - unlawfully discriminatory material
 - stalking
 - use which breaches copyright laws
 - fraudulent activity
 - computer crimes
 - and other computer offences under the *Cyber Crime Act 2001* (Commonwealth) or any other relevant legislation.
- c) In particular, the Diocese is an institution charged with the safety and education of children. Child pornography is abhorrent and represents the antithesis of Diocese's responsibilities to children. Any suspected offender will be referred to the police and their employment will be terminated if the allegations are substantiated.

20.2.11 Offensive or inappropriate material

Offensive or inappropriate material received from people known to the receiver should be deleted and the sender of the material should be asked to refrain from sending such material again. Such material must not be forwarded internally or externally or saved onto Diocesan ICT systems except where the material is required for the purposes of investigating a breach of this policy.

20.2.12 Confidentiality and Privacy

Electronic communication is not a secure means of communication. While every attempt is made to ensure the security of Diocesan ICT systems, users must be aware that this security is not guaranteed, particularly when communicated to an external party. The sender should consider the confidentiality of the material they intend to send when choosing the appropriate means of communication.

The Diocese will make all reasonable attempts to respect your privacy.

- All staff can be provided with a network folder and an email account, which by default has access limited to the staff member – this folder and email account is provided for work related purposes.
- It is to be understood, that at the discretion of an Authorized person, in your absence (personal leave) or at the completion of your employment these may be made accessible to another staff member for the purpose of continuing the functions of the Catholic Education Office or school. This is of vital importance when staff receive email relating to a particular role – this includes, but is not limited to school secretaries and Principals.
- Staff are encouraged to place personal material in a folder clearly marked personal so that a reasonable attempt to protect privacy can be undertaken by relevant parties.

20.2.13 Viruses

Viruses have the potential to seriously damage Diocesan ICT systems. If you use a personal computer on the Diocesan ICT system you are required to have a virus scanner installed and automatically updated.

20.2.14 Social Networking

The popular rise of social networking sites has created unique challenges for parents, carers and staff members alike. Predominately access to these sites by staff members will be during out of work hours, nevertheless in situations where Diocesan students or Diocesan ICT systems are involved; employees are required to abide by this policy.

The Catholic Education Office provides a secure intranet/extranet environment which provides equivalent functionality to social networking sites and is the only approved site or ICT medium for these out of school interactions.

- a) All social networking sites have their own terms and conditions in regards to their use and staff are required to conform to these terms and conditions when accessing these sites on Diocesan ICT systems.
- b) Students are not to be given access to social networking sites when using Diocesan ICT systems. The Internet firewall is configured to block this automatically - if a staff member becomes aware that access is possible they are required to advise the Principal who in turn is to advise the Diocesan IT department.
- c) Diocesan employees are prohibited from being “friends” and interacting with Diocesan students through any ICT medium including email, with the exception of the Diocesan ICT systems, which have been provided for this purpose.
- d) Principals have the right to ask a staff member/parent or community member to remove any references to their school. If the person refuses the CEO will support any legal action that is deemed appropriate.

20.2.15 Student Access to Membership based Web Sites

- a) When a class or individual student login is required for a site then written permission is required from each student's parent or guardian.
- b) The only exception to this is the Diocesan approved list of sites, which will be updated here and on the Diocesan Intranet.
- c) The following list of approved Diocesan sites is current at time of printing – an updated list can be found on the Diocesan intranet on the IT forms page:
 - World book – www.worldbookonline.com
 - Scootle – www.scootle.edu.au
 - Atomic Learning – www.atomiclearning.co.uk
 - Mathletics – www.mathletics.com
- d) Access to the Diocesan Intranet will require written parental approval, as the Diocese is responsible for the security of the site and it provides social networking functionality whereas the approved list does not.
- e) Any web site which allows a non-school or non-Diocesan person to communicate or contact a student is not to be used by students. Technologies covered in 20.2.17 are exempt from this as long as parental approval is given.
- f) The Application for parent/guardian approval is included as 20.2.19 and is the form that must be used. The supplied form includes the following information:
 - Site name
 - Site address
 - Education purpose
 - Whether the site has social networking functionality - in particular it must be explicitly stated if members of the public can contact a student in any manner and/or if any identifying information (name, age, town, state OR country) is able to be viewed.
 - State whether the students are accessing a site with an individual login or a group based login.
 - Virtually all membership based sites require an email address to register – a description of the email address used for this purpose must be included – for example: the class teacher's school email address was used to register the class/student.
- g) This policy is to be applied retrospectively to sites students or classes are members of. If written parent or guardian approval has not been obtained by the start of Term 3 2011, access to those sites must cease

on that day, either by a whole class if permission was not sought or by individual if written permission has not been returned.

20.2.16 Student Access to Staff Logins

Students are not to be given access to staff logins for Diocesan ICT systems, this includes but is not limited to, computer, intranet and email logins.

20.2.17 Student Access to Communication Technologies

Diocesan students are prohibited from accessing any communication technologies using Diocesan ICT systems, including but not limited to, email, twitter and chat services with the following exception:

- a) Diocesan Intranet if written parent or guardian approval has been received.
- b) Diocesan email accounts set up for the express purpose of student use if written parent or guardian approval has been received.

The Internet firewall is configured to block this automatically - if a staff member becomes aware that access is possible they are required to advise the ICT teacher who in turn is to advise the Diocesan IT department.

20.2.18 Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about an electronic communication that is offensive or inappropriate, raise it with your team leader or school principal or, if your team leader or principal is the cause of your complaint, raise it with the Director of Schools.

20.9.15 Parent Permission Slip

Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes



School Name:

INTERNET SITE PERMISSION FORM

Purpose:

In addition to obtaining a parent or guardians permission, this form is intended to inform, with an assessment of risk, the intention of your child's Teacher to use an internet based resource which requires a student to login for access.

Site Risk Assessment

The site(s) allows communication between - (tick all that apply)

- No interaction between site users
- Interaction between class students is possible.
- Public users registered with the site and class students.
- Unregistered (anonymous) users and class students

Students will be accessing the site using:

- An individual login
- A whole of class login

The following information about the student would be given to the site - (tick all that apply)

- First Name
- Surname
- School Name
- Town
- Postcode
- State
- Country

The email address the student will be registered with is:

- The Classes Diocesan email address
- Teacher's Diocesan email address

Access to the student work is –

- Viewable by the public
- Not accessible by the public due to site design
- Not accessible by the public due to permissions applied by the teacher

Education Benefit Assessment

These internet resource will be used in the teaching of :

The unique benefits these sites offer include:

-
-
-
-
-

Sites Covered by this form

Site Name	Site Address (URL)

Guardian Approval

I, _____ (*parent/guardian*)

parent/guardian of _____ (*student's name*)

Please tick one box

give permission

do not give permission

for the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes to provide access to the below mentioned internet site to my child.

Print parent/guardian name

Signature parent/guardian

Date

20.3 Release Notes

Version No	Date	Name	Description / Changes
1.0	29/3/11	Matt Smith	Initial Version
1.1	20/5/11	Matt Smith	20.2.14d 20.2.15c,e & g Appendix