



Councillor Paul Ainslie

Toronto City Council
Scarborough East - Ward 43

Chair, Scarborough Community Council
Chair, Government Management Committee
Chair, Toronto Public Library Board

Date: January 12, 2012
To: Government Management Committee
From: Councillor Paul Ainslie
Re: Allowing access to Facebook

Both private and public corporations across North America have created firewalls to inhibit employees from gaining access to facebook within their networks. Governments followed having the view that staff wasting productive work hours on the social media sites.

It has now been reported that the facebook restriction has introduced a new cost for both private and public corporations. While firewalls have been created employees have found ways to work around the restriction creating more of a nuisance and cost to the corporations as the firewalls have to be continuously upgraded and reconfigured.

A comprehensive employee user strategy to ensure employees use the site appropriately while limiting their personal use during working hours would be beneficial, encompassing the following:

- Write a clear policy for employees after getting their input. Keep a positive tone and avoid focusing on disciplinary action for misconduct.
- Suggest employees keep separate personal and professional accounts. Your employees should assume that clients or future employers read information on their personal accounts.
- Personal use of social media tools on company time shouldn't be prohibited, but employees should be encouraged to limit it in the same way they restrict their personal telephone calls or Internet usage. Company time is for city business.
- If sharing links with business colleagues, they should be sure that the sites are reputable and reflect well on the City. The same advice applies to employees joining online groups.

Recommendations:

1. The Government Management Committee recommends that City of Toronto Staff from Corporate Information, Technology Web and the Clerk's Office explore the feasibility of allowing access to facebook through the City of Toronto network firewall.
2. A comprehensive employee user strategy to ensure employees use the site appropriately be established to include:

- Write a clear policy for employees on use of facebook after getting their input. Keep a positive tone and avoid focusing on disciplinary action for misconduct. Your ultimate goal is to build a sense of trust with your team.
- Suggest a separate personal and professional account on Facebook. It should be assumed that clients or future employers could read information on their personal accounts.
- Employees should be encouraged to limit personal use the same way they limit personal telephone calls or Internet usage.
- Advocate to employees to be sure that when sharing links from other sites on facebook walls with their business colleges, the sites are reputable and reflect well on the City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Ainslie', with a horizontal line underneath.

Councillor Paul Ainslie
Scarborough East Ward 43