

# Privacy issues in the workplace- technology and social media

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Privacy Issues in the Workplace There is increasing technological advancements that relate to computer technology, mobile phone technology, internet applications, and improved networking.

The new technology has affected the modes of communication, networking, and the social media. This influence has a direct on the privacy of employees in a given company. Subject to the broad networking, privacy becomes complex and has such remained a challenge to most organizations and governments including the United States (Australian Government Web).

We have common and federal laws that govern the right to privacy. Other laws governing the privacy of employees in a working environment include the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) that forbids an employer from jeopardizing the employees right to engage in union activities or other protected activities seeking to attain mutual aid or protection within and outside the company (National Labor Relations Board Web).

However, under the recent technological advancements, privacy issues have increased with the new technological generating new privacy concerns for both the employees and the employer. Ideally, the new technological advancements allow the employer to gain access to employee's information around his scope of work. Through the new technology, the employers can initiate telephone monitoring, social media monitoring, electronic mail and voice mail, video monitoring, computer monitoring, and other workplace privacy protections.

Where E-mail/Internet is concerned, the employer can access all the emails and online conversation of an employee. Indeed, the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, stipulates that an employer has can monitor

electronic communications, e-mail and Internet surfing, and instant messaging of an employee where employee is using the employer-provided computer system (US Department of Justice Web). As such, it is the duty of the management to brief the employees on the application of this rule upon employment to avoid privacy issues.

On the other hand, computer monitoring comes in handy where employers use computer software to access the screen or stored in the employees computer terminals and hard disks. They can additionally invoke keystroke monitoring and count time spent away from the computer. Since the employer owns the computer and the terminals, he therefore has a right to monitor an employee's computer usage. However, certain federal offer minimal rights against computer monitoring like the Fourth Amendment of the US constitution that restricts unreasonable search and seizure (Privacy Rights Clearing House Web).

Employers can also initiate social media monitoring of the employees by accessing their Facebook and twitter accounts. This would expose the employee's personal details, personal contacts, relationships, interactions, and communications that may include information on company issues. This would jeopardize the employee's privacy and thus result to complex privacy issues.

Another use of technology that leads to privacy issues is the use of video surveillance that monitors an employee's movement and acts in the organization. More so, this surveillance brings privacy issues when done on areas with legitimate expectations of privacy. To this effect, the law only allows video surveillance in publicly accessible areas.

Telephone monitoring also brings privacy issues although a prior notification to the employee is required and personal calls are not subject to this monitoring. Moreover, phone-monitoring lead to grave privacy issues due to their ability to record personal information and equally transmit it outside the organization. Hence, companies should initiate measures that prohibit the use of camera phones in the workplace.

The above forms of technological monitoring will significantly lead to privacy issues. However, the provisions of the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) set out the procedures governing the monitoring and retrieval of employee's electronic communication (US Department of Justice Web). These provisions are nevertheless invalid if the employee consents to the monitoring of his electronic communication.

In a move to avert the possible privacy issues crisis subject to the new technological advancements, employers should brief the employees on the privacy policy of the company and equally comply with the federal governing privacy of employees, Electronic Communications Privacy Act and the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

#### Works Cited

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