



# NEWS RELEASE

## Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

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### **Federal Judges Issue Internet Use Policy for U.S. Courts**

A committee of United States judges today issued a [report](#) addressing various aspects of Internet use by federal judges and Judiciary employees nationwide.

The report was endorsed unanimously by the 14-judge Committee on Automation and Technology of the Judicial Conference of the United States, and its release was directed by the seven-member Executive Committee of the Conference. The full 27-member Conference – the national policy-making body for the federal courts – is expected to consider the report when it next meets on September 11. The Automation Committee recommends that the Judicial Conference:

- n In 2002, a review of system architecture will be completed under the committee's direction, with a view of possible decentralization of Internet access to individual courts in a manner consistent with the security of the entire judiciary network. Pending the completion of this review, we ask the Judicial Conference to reaffirm (a) that computers connected to the DCN shall access the Internet only through national Internet gateways; and (b) that operations and security at those gateways are under the administrative, managerial, and logistical control of the Administrative Office, subject to the direction of the Conference or, where appropriate, Conference committees.
- n Immediately adopt, on an interim basis, the [model use policy at Appendix D](#) developed by the federal Chief Information Officers Council, as later revised by the subcommittee or the committee to tailor it to the judiciary, as a national minimum standard defining appropriate Internet use, subject to the right of each court unit to impose or maintain more restrictive policies. In carrying out routine administrative, operational, and maintenance responsibilities, should instances of possibly inappropriate use of government resources come to the attention of the management of a court unit or the Administrative Office, established Judicial Conference notification policy will be followed.
- n Reaffirm that individual courts have responsibility to enforce appropriate use policies and direct that the Administrative Office, as part of its regular audit process, examine and comment upon the adequacy of the courts' enforcement methods.

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- n Require the Administrative Office to disseminate to all judicial branch employees now and hereafter hired, and to request each court prominently to display on screen prior to access of the DCN and the Internet, a banner notice clearly and conspicuously disclosing, in such form as the subcommittee or the committee may approve, that the use of the system is subject to the interim policy or, where applicable, more restrictive local policy, that the contents of the use may be viewed and recorded, that the employee's use of the system constitutes consent to such viewing and recording, and that uses inconsistent with the applicable use policy may result in disciplinary action.
  
- n Having discerned no material business use for Gnutella, Napster, Glacier, and Quake, all of which raise immediate and continuing security vulnerabilities, (1) direct the Administrative Office to take appropriate steps to block such traffic involving computers connected to the DCN, and (2) delegate to the committee the authority to block other tunneling protocol that may cause security breaches.

A copy of the Automation Committee report can be located at <http://www.uscourts.gov/judnow/jccsumreport.pdf>.

The Judicial Conference of the United States is the principal policy-making body for the federal court system. The Chief Justice serves as the presiding officer of the Conference, which is composed of the chief judges of the 13 courts of appeals, a district judge from each of the 12 geographic circuits, and the chief judge of the Court of International Trade. The Conference meets twice a year to consider administrative and policy issues affecting the court system and to make recommendations to Congress concerning legislation involving the Judicial Branch.