

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2010-11
20 October 2010

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: Use of On-Line Services

REFERENCE: Written Question–Senator Colbeck

QUESTION No.: SI-35

Has the department instituted any policies or protocols that restrict or deny staff the use of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs? If yes, please explain what restrictions have been put in place. Why were these restrictions put in place?

If not, why not?

Are staff utilising these sites during work hours? If yes, how many hours are spent on these sites? What time are these sites most accessed (i.e. lunch time?).

Will measures be introduced to restrict access to these sites?

ANSWER

The Department allows access to Youtube as well as to online discussion forums and blogs. Access to Facebook, MySpace and Twitter is provided to staff where there is an agreed business case. This approach takes into account advice in the Commonwealth's Information Security Manual which recommends preventing access to social networking websites that pose a higher than normal security risk.

Departmental staff are able to access these sites during business hours.

During the week commencing 17 October 2010 the total time spent accessing Youtube, Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and online discussion forums and blogs was approximately four hundred hours. This includes usage by staff from the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and the Department of Resources Energy and Tourism (DRET), as DRET receives ICT Services under a shared services agreement.

The pattern of daily usage for these sites is consistent with the overall pattern of Internet access in the Departments. Usage generally peaks at approximately 1pm, and remains steady until approximately 3pm after which it falls.

The Department has no plans to amend the current arrangements.