

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS QUESTION
(Supplementary Budget Estimates 20 October – 21 October)

Question: SBT 114

Topic: Social Media

Senator Bushby asked:

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? Will measures be introduced to restrict access to these sites?

Answer:

Yes, as ACCC Internet facilities are provided for work-related purposes, policies and protocols are in place to deny the use by employees of social media for personal use. The following is an extract from the ACCC's internal policy on this subject:

Employees must not use, or communicate through, social media unless:

- *that person is using social media for work-related purposes*
- *the General Manager of that branch has approved of the use of social media by that staff member for those purposes*
- *the General Manager of that branch has notified the Information Management and Technology Services Branch and that Branch has approved of the use of social media by that staff member for those purposes*

Social media, in this context, includes:

- *blogs*
- *chat rooms*
- *forums and billboards*
- *social networking websites*
- *other collaborative communication facilities*

Specific social networking sites are blocked at the firewall. Staff must be given permission to access these sites, and this will only be provided for a legitimate business purpose.

Staff who are using these sites during working hours and from office facilities have been given access to these sites for work purposes only—to post to, maintain, monitor or develop new communications channels for the ACCC. Staff with access include:

- the Media Unit for monitoring twitter
- staff in the Product Safety branches for the Product Safety Australia twitter account (@ProductSafetyAU) operated by the ACCC and for YouTube product safety videos.