

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Portfolio

Question No. 133

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013:

Social Media

- a) Has there been any changes to department and agency social media or protocols about staff access and usage of YouTube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since May 2012 Budget Estimates? If yes, please explain and provide copies of any advice that has been issued.
- b) Does the department/agency monitor usage of social media?
- c) If yes, provide details of the usage (for example details could include average hours per employee, hours when usage peaks).
- d) Has there been a change to the department/agency protocols due to staff usage?
- e) If no, why not? Will the department/agency monitor usage in the future?
- f) Does social media impact on employee productivity? Provide details (details could include increased internet usage in general or increased internet usage in standard business hours)

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

Responses covering the time period to 1 September 2012 can be found in Question on Notice 124 from the 2012 Supplementary Budget Estimates round. For the period 2 September 2012 to 31 January 2013, the following agencies have no change to their responses from the 2012 Supplementary Budget Estimates round: Attorney-General's Department, Australian Crime Commission, Australian Human Rights Commission, Australian Law Reform Commission, CrimTrac, Customs and Border Protection Service, Family Court of Australia, Federal Magistrates Court of Australia, Federal Court of Australia, the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner,

See below for other responses.

Administrative Appeals Tribunal

- a) There has been no change since the May 2012 Budget Estimates. The Tribunal is currently revising its policy on use of Tribunal internet and email facilities which will include reference to use of social media sites.
- b) The Tribunal logs internet and email use but does not monitor social media usage other than on an ad hoc basis.
- c) N/A
- d) No

- e) The use of social media does not appear to be an issue in relation to employee productivity at the Tribunal. However, the Tribunal expects that its revised policy on the use of internet and email will include blocking access to social media sites from Tribunal devices.
- f) See answer to paragraph e).

Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity

- a) The Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI) has not made any changes to social media policy since October 2012 Senate Estimates.
- b) ACLEI does not routinely monitor social media use. Logs of internet use are retained for audit or investigation purposes.
- c) N/A – please see part b)
- d) N/A – please see part b)
- e) The Attorney-General’s Department provides IT services to ACLEI under a memorandum of understanding. ACLEI has no plans to introduce usage monitoring beyond that already provided by the Department.
- f) There is no indication that social media usage is affecting employee productivity at ACLEI.

Australian Federal Police

- a) No changes since October 2012 Senate Estimates.
- b) The AFP does monitor usage of Social Media as part of the overall monitoring of internet usage. However, monitoring is restricted to the amount of data downloaded.

The AFP does not monitor the hours spent on the internet as it is difficult to determine when a user is actually browsing the internet or simply has a web page open but may actually be doing other work.
- c) In terms of data downloaded, the average daily data download for the top 50 social network users in the AFP is 12.4 megabytes. The daily average social networking use of the entire 6690 AFPNet users is 0.44 megabytes.

The AFP also ‘coaches’ users when they are accessing websites which may not be related to their work. Coaching consists of displaying a screen advising users of the proper use of the internet as per the relevant National Guideline and asking the user to confirm that they would still like to access the website in question. If confirmed, the web page is displayed. The ‘coaching’ screen is displayed approximately every ten minutes.
- d) Please see part a)
- e) There has been no need presented for a change in AFPNet protocols however the procedures currently in place are ongoing.
- f) AFP policy is to support a philosophy of reasonable private usage of AFP ICT system, provided this does not compromise or detract from the appointee's official duties. There are aspects of the use of social networking that can improve productivity rather than detract from it considering the nature of AFP business. Appointees are also encouraged to work flexibly so reasonable use of social networking during core work hours does not, in itself, demonstrate a loss of productivity.

Australian Government Solicitor

Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) is a government business enterprise operating on a commercial and competitive basis in providing legal and related services to government and its agencies. AGS does not receive any Budget or other appropriations and its employees are engaged outside of the *Public Service Act 1999*. The question is therefore not applicable to AGS.

Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation

- a) There has been no change to ASIO's social media protocols about staff access and usage of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussion forums and blogs.
- b) For security reasons, it would not be appropriate to publicly comment on this matter.
- c) For security reasons, it would not be appropriate to publicly comment on this matter.
- d) Please see part a)
- e) For security reasons, it would not be appropriate to publicly comment on this matter.
- f) ASIO has not identified any impact on employee productivity from social media usage.

High Court of Australia

- a) There have been no changes to the High Court's protocols about staff access and usage of social media since October 2012 Senate Estimates.
- b) We have a system that monitors URLs accessed by users.
- c) The system mentioned in b) could be used to infer some measure of hours spent.
- d) Please see part a)
- e) We have a system that blocks or warns users about accessing social media sites, if they attempt to access them.
- f) Staff are only to access social media as it relates to their duties and in accordance with our policy which includes: "does not limit the ability of the employee to conduct their work".

Office of Parliamentary Counsel

- a) No
- b) Yes
- c) Number of visits to the website and the volume of data downloaded from that website. Statistics relating to time are not monitored because, like other applications, employees may leave a web page open but may not actually be using it the whole time it is open.
- d) Please see part a) No
- e) The usage has been acceptable to OPC.
- f) OPC has not conducted research into the impact of social media on employee productivity.