

MOM-POL-Web Advertising and Linking Policy

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Category: Information Technology, Web Management

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Issuing Authority: State Information Technology Services

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to implement the POL-Web Advertising and Linking Policy for defining actions to fulfill the responsibility.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all state agencies. 2-17-505 et seq., MCA, with the exemptions as defined in 2-17-516, MCA and 2-17-546, MCA .

III. Roles And Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities are required by this policy and in accordance with POL-Information Security Policy - Appendix B (Security Roles and Responsibilities).

IV. Requirements

The Internet has become one of the state's most important resources to provide easy access to information and services, both internally and to the citizens and customers of the state. However, the tool presents many challenges in dealing with acceptable/appropriate use and privacy concerns. Some agencies have been requested to allow linking to private organizations, web banner advertising on state websites or creating partnerships with advertising companies to host an agency's website and subsidize the costs of operation with revenues from vendor posted web advertisements. Others have been offered software at no charge in exchange for displaying the company's icon or link on their site. These opportunities may appear desirable on the surface.

There are, however, complex policy issues that arise that this policy is intended to address.

A. The state will not accept banner ads and vendor hosted website advertising for the following reasons:

1. The state is unable to exercise full control over banner advertisement redirects that may result in unintended consequences to the user and/or the state agency. Individuals "clicking" on a banner advertisement have little or no control of the redirect options to return the user to the original website. Rerouted advertising links can result in the user being linked to questionable or problematic websites, including those currently POL-Web Advertising and Linking Policy Page 2 of 3 prohibited for state access (see POL-Information Security Policy - Appendix A (Baseline Security Controls)), which will negatively impact the state's image.

2. Privacy violations may occur when a user accesses a web advertisement. Some websites record information about users by automatically depositing a piece of information in the "cookie" file on the user's computer. The cookie helps track information communicated between the user's browser and the server (see POL-Internet Privacy and Security Policy)

3. Advertising for products and/or services may be perceived by the user as being fully endorsed by the state of Montana and may increase the risk of perceived discrimination.

4. The lack of accepted industry standards and guidelines regarding "best practices" in web advertising make it questionable as to how to best use this media feature to benefit the state and its citizens.

5. The lack of published guidelines and specific criteria make it difficult to determine what criteria might be used to evaluate acceptable web advertising versus unacceptable advertising for the state.

B. All links from any state web page are at the sole discretion of the state through the agencies. The state will not link to organization, citizen or business websites unless one of the following conditions is met:

1. The link adds appropriate value to the state site, is in the state's best interest, does not discriminate against like sites, and is relevant in content.

2. The state has an active contract with the organization, the link adds appropriate value to the state site, is in the state's best interest, and is relevant in content.

3. The link provides access to a website which contains software that is necessary or enhances the operation of the state site (e.g. Adobe Acrobat Reader).

V. Enforcement

A. PRO-Establishing and Implementing Statewide IT Policies, Standards, and Procedures governs policy changes or exceptions. Submit an Action Request form to request a review or change to this instrument. Submit an Exception Request form to request an exception. Changes to policies, standards, and procedures will be prioritized and acted on based on impact and need.

B. 2-17-514, MCA, addresses agency level enforcement information.

C. Montana Operations Manual (MOM) Discipline Policy addresses individual level enforcement information.

VI. Definitions

Refer to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Glossary of Key Information Security Terms for common information systems security-related definitions .

VII. References

A. Legislation

1. Section [2-17-505, MCA](#)

2. Section [2-17-512, MCA](#)

3. Section [2-17-514, MCA](#)

4. Section [2-17-516, MCA](#)

5. Section [2-17-546, MCA](#)

6. [Montana Information Technology Act \(MITA\)](#), Sections 2-17-504 et seq., MCA

B. Policies, Directives, Regulations, Rules, Procedures, and Memoranda

1. Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM): [ARM 2.12](#)

2. NIST: [Glossary of Key Information Security Terms](#)

3. Statewide Policy: [Discipline Policy](#)

4. Statewide Policy: [Information Security Policy: Appendix B \(Security Roles and Responsibilities\)](#)

5. Statewide Policy: [POL-Internet Privacy and Security Policy](#)

6. Statewide Procedure: [Action and Exception Request Procedure](#)

7. Statewide Procedure: Establishing and Implementing Statewide IT Policies, Standards, and Procedures

8. State of Montana Office of the Governor Executive Order No. 09-2016