

---

# Information Technology Policy

---

## *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania External Web Site Linking Policy*

<b><i>ITP Number</i></b> ITP-APP007	<b><i>Effective Date</i></b> December 18, 2006
<b><i>Category</i></b> Recommended Policy	<b><i>Supersedes</i></b>
<b><i>Contact</i></b> <a href="mailto:RA-itcentral@pa.gov">RA-itcentral@pa.gov</a>	<b><i>Scheduled Review</i></b> April 2015

**This Information Technology Policy (ITP) establishes enterprise-wide policy for web site linking.**

### 1. Purpose

The Commonwealth's presence on the Internet is an important method for providing information and services to citizens and the business community. It is imperative visitors accessing the Web sites know that privacy and security policies are in effect, and that all information presented on the Web sites is appropriate. While these policies are placed on the Commonwealth's Web sites they are not necessarily on those Web sites outside state agencies. Consequently, the Commonwealth needs to make visitors aware when they are being directed from Commonwealth Web sites to those not under the management or control of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### 2. Scope

This Information Technology Policy (ITP) applies to all departments, boards, commissions and councils under the Governor's jurisdiction. Agencies not under the Governor's jurisdiction are strongly encouraged to follow this ITP.

### 3. Policy

Each agency, board, and commission under the governor's jurisdiction is to establish a policy for including links to external (non-Commonwealth) Web sites. External Web sites are defined as those Web sites not under the management or control of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This policy is intended primarily for the Commonwealth's public Web sites, but agencies are encouraged to apply it to their intranet Web sites as well.

Given the diverse nature of Commonwealth agencies, boards, and commissions, the Office of General Counsel determined that each agency is to develop an external linking policy specific to the agency's core mission and business requirements.

An agency's linking policy is to be applied to all external links for public Web sites operated by the given agency. Agencies may include graphical buttons and icons as links on agency Web sites, but are to do so in accordance with ITP-ACC001 - *IT Accessibility Policy*.

When following an external link, Web site visitors are to first be directed to a notice warning them that the Commonwealth neither supports nor endorses the information, advertisements, or products found on external Web sites. This exit notice page is not to include an automatic timing mechanism that forwards the visitor to the external link. To adhere to ITP-ACC001, the visitor is to take an intentional action to proceed to an external Web site not under Commonwealth control (e.g., choose a button to proceed through the Web site).

#### **Example for the Commonwealth**

The document(s) below may contain links to websites that are not under the management or control of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and are not governed by the privacy or security policies of the Commonwealth. We have provided links to these sites because they may contain information or features that may be of interest to you. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania does not necessarily endorse the views expressed, or the facts presented, on these sites. Furthermore, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania does not endorse any commercial products that may be advertised or available on them.

**Example for the Federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS)** Web site's "Exit Disclaimer" uses the following language with buttons to allow the visitor to continue on to the external link, or return to the previous page:

**Please note** *that by clicking on this link, you will leave the IRS Web site and enter a privately owned Web site created, operated and maintained by a private business.*

*The information that this private business collects and maintains as a result of your visit to its Web site may differ from the information that the IRS collects and maintains. (Please see the IRS Web site privacy and security notice for privacy protections IRS provides to Web site visitors).*

*By linking to this private business, the IRS is not endorsing its products, services, or privacy or security policies. We recommend you review the*

*business's information collection policy or terms and conditions to fully understand what information is collected by this private business.*

**4. Related ITPs/Other References**

- ITP-PRO001 – IT Procurement Review Process

**5. Authority**

- Executive Order 2011-05, Enterprise Information Technology Governance

**6. Publication Version Control**

It is the user's responsibility to ensure they have the latest version of this publication. Questions regarding this publication are to be directed to [RA-itcentral@pa.gov](mailto:RA-itcentral@pa.gov).

This chart contains a history of this publication's revisions:

Version	Date	Purpose of Revision
Original	12/18/2006	Base Document
	8/18/2010	Added an example for Commonwealth external link
	10/25/2010	ITB Refresh
	4/10/2014	ITP Reformat