
Information Technology Policy

Internet Browser Policy

ITP Number ITP-SFT006	Effective Date November 20, 2009
Category Software	Supersedes None
Contact RA-itcentral@pa.gov	Scheduled Review June 2022

1. Purpose

This Information Technology Policy (ITP) establishes enterprise-wide standards and policies for internet browser technology.

Setting and implementing internet browser technology standards benefits the Commonwealth through increased enterprise security, streamlining patch management and ensuring compatibility with enterprise applications.

2. Background

An internet browser is a software application used for retrieving, presenting, and traversing information resources on the World Wide Web. The purpose of an internet browser is to bring information resources to the user. Internet browser software provides the following capabilities to a user:

- Allows the user to open multiple information resources at the same time. This can be done in different browser windows or in different tabs of the same window.
- Includes pop-up blockers to prevent unwanted windows from appearing without the user's consent.
- Displays bookmarked pages so users can return quickly to pages they already viewed (favorites).
- Features Web feed aggregator "live bookmarks" and behaves like a folder of bookmarks corresponding to recent entries in the feed.
- Includes incremental find features to search within a Web page.
- Supports HTTP Secure (HTTPS).
- Offers quick and easy ways to delete the Web cache, cookies, and browsing history.
- Provides development features for creating, actively modifying, and debugging code.
- Provides the ability to browse incognito or in private.

3. Scope

This ITP applies to all departments, boards, offices, commissions, and councils under the Governor's jurisdiction (hereinafter referred to as "agencies"). Agencies not under the Governor's jurisdiction are strongly encouraged to follow this ITP.

4. Policy

Agencies shall refer to Management Directive 205.34 Amended - *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy* for acceptable use of internet browsers.

All internet browser products shall be patched with service packs within six (6) months of the release date in accordance with ITP-SYM006 - *Desktop and Server Software Patching Policy*.

Agencies shall ensure that all internet traffic will be directed through the CoPA Internet Access Control and Content Filtering implementation per ITP-SEC003 - *Enterprise Security Auditing and Monitoring - Internet Access Control and Content Filtering (IACCF) Standard*.

Agencies shall test and verify that all line-of-business applications are compatible with the current internet browser standards before upgrading to new standards.

Agencies are responsible to block incognito and private browsing at the client machine level.

Agencies shall follow the current internet browser standards identified in STD-SFT006A *Internet Browser Standards*.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Agencies shall adhere to the policies presented in this ITP. Internet browsers listed in Agency Optional may be used by agencies to meet business requirements. If an agency chooses to deploy the browsers listed in Agency Optional, the agency assumes all risk and responsibility and will maintain and update the browser software patches to the current stable versions to protect from potential vulnerabilities. With the exception of the OA Consolidated Agencies, agency patch and security management for Agency Optional technologies will not be managed by OA/OIT. To stay up to date with security alerts, sign up for the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) email alerts: <https://www.us-cert.gov/>.

Agencies shall adhere to ITP-SYM006 *Commonwealth IT Resources Patching Policy* for guidance. Agencies should evaluate and test for both enterprise and agency application/service compatibility prior to deploying these technologies.

Agency Optional browsers' licenses are to be reviewed along with the intended purpose of the software product. This review must be accomplished internally at each agency. Obtaining legal counsel review is necessary to assess the impact of the license provisions and how the agency may enter into the licensing agreement. Agencies shall ensure that adequate legal review has been performed prior to clicking through or otherwise agreeing to any license agreement. This ensures the proper license risks have been assessed, and any distribution or other substantive licensing conditions have been, and can continue to be, met.

Where any Agency Optional browser is freeware, agencies need not seek a waiver under ITP-SFT001 *Software Licensing*, but agencies are nonetheless solely responsible to review, assess risks in accordance with, and comply with all ITPs, including but not limited to the following requirements:

Agencies are solely responsible to ensure that the use of freeware will not invalidate the terms as specified in the end-user agreement and that the product does not conflict with existing support agreements. Agencies granted approval to use a freeware application are to have their appropriate legal office review the terms of the product agreement to ensure they are acceptable to the Commonwealth.

Agencies are responsible for support and inventory control of freeware products. Freeware products to be used in production are to be tested and validated in a development environment to ensure security and quality control.

Where any Agency Optional browser is Open Source Software (OSS), agencies need not seek a waiver under ITP-SFT001 *Software Licensing*, but agencies are nonetheless solely responsible to review, assess risks in accordance with, and comply with all ITPs, including but not limited to the following requirements:

Agencies desiring to install OSS to either a desktop or server platform are to coordinate with their respective support organizations for the management of those platforms. Agencies are responsible for support and inventory control of OSS. Agencies planning to use OSS in production are to test and validate the OSS in a development environment to ensure security and quality control.

Agencies are to adhere to Commonwealth standards for applying security related patches to OSS products. See ITP-SYM006 - *Commonwealth IT Resources Patching Policy*, for detailed information.

Agencies are to consult with their legal office regarding the rights and responsibilities conferred by the OSS license associated with the solution.

Agencies are responsible to ensure that adequate legal review has been performed prior to distributing any source code. This ensures the proper license agreement has been obtained, any distribution conditions have been met, and that indemnification risks associated with use and distribution have been addressed.

Agencies are responsible to continually keep informed of as well as alert their legal offices to the most up-to-date terms of agreements and other associated policies provided by licensors of Agency Optional products.

5.2 OA/OIT shall coordinate with the Agency's Continuity of Operations Program Manager to ensure that all software supporting essential functions (i.e., business or IT) are properly categorized and submitted in the Application Inventory (AI) and aligned to the enterprise online continuity planning software.

6. Related ITPs/Other References

Commonwealth policies, including Executive Orders, Management Directives, and IT Policies are published on the Office of Administration's public portal:

<http://www.oe.pa.gov/Policies/Pages/default.aspx>

- Management Directive 205.34 Amended- *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy*
- Management Directive 205.41 *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Continuity of Operations (COOP) Program*
- ITP-ACC001 *Digital Accessibility Policy*
- ITP-BUS004 – *IT Policy Waiver Review Process*
- ITP-PLT017 – *Desktop and Laptop Operating System Standards*
- OPD-PLIT017A – *Windows 10 Configuration Requirements*

- ITP-SEC003 - Enterprise Security Auditing and Monitoring - Internet Access Control and Content Filtering (IACCF) Standard
- ITP-SFT001 - Software Licensing
- STD-SFT006A Internet Browser Standards
- ITP-SYM006 - Commonwealth IT Patching Policy
- Microsoft Support Lifecycle - <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/lifecycle>
- United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) - <https://www.us-cert.gov/>

7. Authority

Executive Order 2016-06, Enterprise Information Technology Governance

8. Publication Version Control

It is the [Authorized User's](#) responsibility to ensure they have the latest version of this publication, which appears on <https://itcentral.pa.gov> for Commonwealth personnel and on the Office of Administration public portal: <http://www.oa.pa.gov/Policies/Pages/default.aspx>. Questions regarding this publication are to be directed to RA-ITCentral@pa.gov.

9. Exemption from this Policy

In the event an agency chooses to seek an exemption from the guidance within this ITP, a request for a policy waiver is to be submitted via the enterprise IT policy waiver process. Refer to ITP-BUS004 *IT Waiver Review Process* for guidance.

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

Version	Date	Purpose of Revision	Redline
Original	11/20/2009	Base Document	
Revision	10/25/2010	Refresh	
Revision	2/11/2014	Refresh	
Revision	10/09/2015	Updated Internet Explorer Technology statuses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Explorer 11 – added to Current • Internet Explorer 9 & 10 – added to Contain • Internet Explorer 8 – added to Retire • Removed Internet Explorer 11 & 12 from Emerging/Research • Removed Opera from Emerging/Research • Removed SAP GUI version requirement for IE 8 • Added SAP GUI version requirement for IE 11 • Removed Objectives section (redundant) • Added language detailing Internet Explorer 9 & 10 will move to Retired status after January 11th, 2016. 	
Revision	01/12/2015	Removed Internet Explorer 9, 10 from Contain, moved to Retire status	
Revision	02/26/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add Microsoft Edge browser to the “Emerging” classification • Added language notifying agencies must submit and receive an ITP waiver prior to deployment 	

Revision	08/09/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed Firefox, Chrome from Emerging/Research Technology status • Added new Technology Status “Agency Optional” category and added Firefox, Chrome, Edge browsers • Added additional language on Agency responsibilities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Licensing guidance ○ No waiver required for ITP-APP020/APP033 to deploy freeware, open source software (OSS) Agency Optional browsers • Added additional references • Added Exemption section • Revised “Internet” to “internet” to reflect new AP Style standard 	
Revision	02/22/2017	Moved to Software domain from Application, including ITP number change Revised references to ITP-APP domain to reflect new SFT domain ITPs Replaces ITP-APP035 <i>Internet Browser Policy</i>	
Review	06/16/2017	No changes	
Revision	06/25/2020	Updated Exemption section to remove reference to COPPAR	Revised IT Policy Redline <06/25/2020>
Revision	03/31/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved Internet Browser Standards to a supplemental document • Moved Internet Explorer 11 to Contain • Moved Microsoft Edge to Current • Added in private and incognito to policy 	Revised IT Policy Redline <03/31/2021>
Revision	06/04/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OA/OIT Responsibility regarding Continuity of Operations language added • COOP Management Directive referenced 	Revised IT Policy Redline <06/04/2021>