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Weekly Cybersecurity Tips

If you have ever tried to check your personal e-mail from a County computer, then you are aware that access to all personal e-mail websites has been restricted. Although this may seem an unnecessary step to many end users, personal e-mail is one of today's biggest threats to an organization's cybersecurity posture.

As an end user, by checking your personal e-mail on a County computer, you are extending the risk of your personal mailbox to the workplace; any spam, viruses or otherwise malicious e-mails present within your inbox are now present within the County's computing environment – any attacks that have targeted your personal e-mail have now spread to the County.

The County's e-mail system is carefully managed and has been rigorously secured by the IT department; the security measures implemented by the IT department minimize the risk of suspicious e-mails, links and attachments. By accessing your personal e-mail from a County computer, you bypass many of the County's cybersecurity defenses, rendering them less effective, or worse, wholly useless.

While the County takes great measures in securing its e-mail system, Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo!, Comporium, etc., all take minimal efforts in securing their users' personal mailboxes – why? These companies' fine print use agreements protect them from being liable for any damages incurred by users opening e-mails that compromise their personal information. At the end of the day, none of the parties at Gmail or Yahoo! take any interest in the contents of your personal mailbox, both malicious and legitimate e-mails included.

Due to the lack of security controls surrounding personal e-mails, access to these services and websites has been restricted County-wide. Were even a single (1) County employee to open a suspicious attachment from their personal e-mail on a County computer, it could cause a cybersecurity incident such as those recently seen at Mecklenburg, Davidson County, Chester County Schools, Colorado's Department of Transportation and Atlanta.

– The IT Department



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