

U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



FINAL EVALUATION REPORT: United States Election Assistance Commission INTERNET USAGE

**No. I-EV-EAC-02-08
FEBRUARY 2009**



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
1225 New York Ave. NW - Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

February 17, 2009

Memorandum

To: Gineen B. Beach
Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

From: Curtis W. Crider *Curtis W. Crider*
Inspector General

Subject: Final Evaluation Report – United States Election Assistance Commission Internet Usage (Assignment No. I-EV-EAC-02-08)

We contracted with the independent certified public accounting firm of Clifton Gunderson LLP (Clifton Gunderson) to conduct the subject evaluation. The objective of the evaluation was to determine whether the U.S. Election Assistance Commission had implemented effective controls to ensure compliance with internet usage policies. The review covered Internet activity from August 24, 2008 through September 6, 2008 and focused on access to sexually explicit, gambling, gaming, and auction sites. The evaluation found that the EAC had effective controls to prevent the access to sexually explicit, gambling, gaming, and auction sites. The evaluation was performed in accordance with the January 2005, *Quality Standards for Inspections*, issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency. A response to this report is not required.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please call me at (202) 566-3125.

Cc: Commissioners Rodriguez, Hillman, Davidson
Executive Director
Chief Operating Officer
Director of Administration

UNITED STATES ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

INTERNET USAGE EVALUATION REPORT

November 17, 2008



Mr. Curtis Crider
Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
1225 New York Avenue NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Crider,

We are pleased to provide the Internet Usage Report, detailing the results of our review of Election Assistance Commission's (EAC) controls in place and the appropriateness of EAC employee/contractor Internet activity.

The objective of our review was to determine whether EAC has implemented effective controls to ensure compliance with internet usage policies. Our review focused on access to sexually explicit, gambling, gaming, and auction sites. The review included EAC and/or General Services Administration (GSA) efforts to identify, monitor, and prevent access to sexually explicit and gambling websites along with actions taken by management to hold employees accountable for non-compliance with established policies. Our review identified the types of sites visited and the time spent on the sites. The review did not include a review of e-mail or other means of transferring prohibited material.

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the January 2005, *Quality Standards for Inspections*, issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency. The review encompassed Internet activity from August 24, 2008 through September 6, 2008.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist your office with these reports. Should you have any questions please call George Fallon at (301) 931-2050.

Clifton Gunderson LLP

Calverton, Maryland
November 17, 2008

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I. BACKGROUND

The EAC was established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). Central to its role, EAC serves as a national clearinghouse and resource for information and review of procedures with respect to the administration of Federal elections. According to the text of HAVA, the law was enacted to:

" ... establish a program to provide funds to states to replace punch card voting systems, to establish the Election Assistance Commission in the administration of Federal elections and to otherwise provide assistance with the administration of certain Federal election laws and programs, to establish minimum election administration standards for states and units of local government with responsibility for the administration of Federal elections, and for other purposes."

HAVA requires the EAC to:

- Generate technical guidance on the administration of federal elections.
- Produce voluntary voting systems guidelines.
- Research and report on matters that affect the administration of Federal elections.
- Provide information and guidance with respect to laws, procedures, and technologies affecting the administration of Federal elections.
- Administer payments to states to meet HAVA requirements.
- Provide grants for election technology development and for pilot programs to test election technology.
- Manage funds targeted to certain programs designed to encourage youth participation in elections.
- Develop a national program for the testing, certification, and decertification of voting systems. Maintain the national mail voter registration form that was developed in accordance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA), report to Congress every two years on the impact of the NVRA on the administration of Federal elections, and provide information to states on their responsibilities under that law.
- Audit persons who received Federal funds authorized by HAVA from the GSA or the EAC.
- Submit an annual report to Congress describing EAC activities for the previous fiscal year (FY).

The EAC provides all system users with information technology training which includes a rules of behavior. At the end of the training module, users certify that they have read and taken the EAC Security Awareness Training module and agree to abide by the EAC Rules of Behavior. The EAC Rules of Behavior is based on GSA Order CIO P2100.1C – GSA Information Technology (IT) Security Policy and applicable to all EAC employees and contractors authorized to use. This GSA Order was issued on July 3, 2003 and applicable to authorized users of EAC. Users who do not comply with the IT General Rules of Behavior may incur disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution. Both the GSA Order CIO P2100.1C – GSA Information Technology (IT) Security Policy and EAC Security Awareness training documentation provide specific examples of acceptable and unacceptable Internet usage.

The EAC Office of the Inspector General (OIG) contracted with Clifton Gunderson LLP to conduct EAC's review of Internet Usage Activity.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objective of our review was to determine whether EAC has implemented effective controls to ensure compliance with internet usage policies.

III. SCOPE & METHODOLOGY

The review included EAC and/or GSA efforts to identify, monitor, and prevent access to sexually explicit and gambling websites along with actions taken by management to hold employees accountable for non-compliance with established policies. Our review identified the types of sites visited and the time spent on the sites. The review did not include a review of e-mail or other means of transferring prohibited material.

CG performed the following steps to determine whether EAC has implemented effective controls to ensure compliance with internet usage policies.

- Inspected EAC policies and procedures addressing internet usage.
- Inspected user training documentation which describes acceptable internet usage and sanctions for non-compliance.
- Evaluated firewall configurations (which restrict Internet usage) for reasonableness.
- Evaluated and tested Internet usage activity for frequency, and types of sites visited
- Re-performed user access to questionable sites (i.e. sexually explicit, gambling, gaming, and auction sites) to validate suspected anomalies.
- Evaluated EAC and GSA efforts to effectively identify, monitor, and prevent access to inappropriate Internet sites.
- Documented results of testing efforts

IV. DETAILS OF RESULTS

EAC has developed user education policies related to acceptable and prohibited Internet usage activity within its security awareness training material. Additionally, GSA utilizes Internet Web filtering software to restrict inbound Internet activity with content that is included within certain categories including: adult material, peer to peer file sharing, gambling, proxy avoidance, racism and hate, and security.

We reviewed GSA provided internet usage logs from the WebSense software of EAC Internet user activity during 8/24/08 to 9/06/08 (for EAC assigned Internet Protocol (IP) address ranges.

When a user attempts to access an Internet site which is classified as a blocked category, a warning banner appears "Access to this page is restricted at this time". We noted that the WebSense software effectively filters blocked Internet content of sexually explicit, gambling, gaming, and auction sites for the 699,336 incoming Internet Uniform Resource Locator (URLs) during the period under review. These URLs represent activity between IP addresses assigned to EAC by GSA.

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon our inspection of EAC's security awareness training content related to acceptable Internet usage and information technology systems, inspection of Internet content filtering provided by the WebSense software, and testing of actual user Internet activity during the period 8/24/08 to 9/06/08, we determined that Internet content of sexually explicit, gambling, gaming, and auction sites is being effectively controlled.

OIG's Mission

The OIG audit mission is to provide timely, high-quality professional products and services that are useful to OIG's clients. OIG seeks to provide value through its work, which is designed to enhance the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in EAC operations so they work better and cost less in the context of today's declining resources. OIG also seeks to detect and prevent fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in these programs and operations. Products and services include traditional financial and performance audits, contract and grant audits, information systems audits, and evaluations.

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By Mail: U.S. Election Assistance Commission
Office of Inspector General
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Washington, DC 20005

E-mail: eacoig@eac.gov

OIG Hotline: 866-552-0004 (toll free)

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