




MEMORANDUM

Date: May 22, 2020

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Tools for Managing and Tracking Staff Productivity while Telecommuting**

Based on the discussion of the Board at the May 21, 2020 meeting, I am attaching a memorandum from our Chief Information Officer regarding tools that are available for the purpose of ensuring productivity regarding employees who may telework or telecommute.

This communication concludes that our virtual private networking tools are simply there to allow computer connections from one network to another with appropriate security. It is not for the purpose of monitoring productivity. About the only thing we can monitor is whether the device is on or off.

There is general consensus that there is no specific tool to ensure that those who are teleworking are being productive. The best tool is to have appropriate manager and supervisor reports on productivity of expected work and how it is being accomplished. To be successful at telework requires extensive training of both management and employees about how to effectively telework.

As I stated previously, this organization was thrown into telework as an employee safety measure not because we planned for it.

CHH/lab

Attachment

c: Jan Leshar, Chief Deputy County Administrator



Date: May 20, 2020

To: Chuck Huckelberry
County Administrator

From: Dan Hunt
Chief Information Officer

Via: Jan Leshner
Chief Deputy County Administrator

Re: VPN or Other Tools for Management and Tracking of Staff Productivity while Telecommuting

Pima County has three (3) Virtual Private Networking (VPN) solutions currently in place to provide access to staff members working remotely (telecommuting). VPN solutions log "computer connections" from one network (in this case the employee's home network) to another network (in this case the Pima County network). Those logs provide data to inform us when a County laptop (by computer name) connects to a VPN management device (by system name) on the County network, and does not log the "user's name" that is requesting that connection. The job of the VPN is solely to verify and securely connect devices on different networks.

As an example, an employee logs onto a computer, and that computer securely connects through the VPN, and logs onto the County network on Monday morning at 8:00 AM. If the employee using the device does not log the computer "off" of the network until Friday evening at 5:00 PM, there will be no log information within the VPN solution that will tell us if the person actually performed any work during those times. That is not the job of the VPN, thus it does not log that information.

Other systems within the Pima County network log when users log on and off. The problem is that there may be multiple "log ins" when the employee only knows they logged in one time. If the employee has a County cell phone, and the cell phone connects to send/receive email, that will show the employee logged in, but the data provided doesn't contain any information to show "how much work" may have been accomplished. Also, Microsoft by nature will check to ensure a user is still logged in, and this can show that the user "logged in" again.

The Information Technology Department (ITD) has never invested in tools or systems to tie the data of the VPN systems, the Active Directory systems, the email systems, and others together because telecommuting was only approved for a very limited number of staff members for specific situations in the past, and so verifying telecommuting information has never been something that has been done. During this pandemic as County employees were allowed to telecommute, ITD, Finance, and Analytics/Data Governance (ADG) pulled data into a data warehouse to report on the time employees were logged onto the network and "performing work". We found the data was difficult to understand and did not provide enough information to make any sound decisions. We determined time "logged on" may be good enough for some departments to determine if their staff members were working, but for the majority of the departments it wouldn't prove anything, so the process was terminated.

To: Chuck Huckelberry, County Administrator, via Jan Leshner, Chief Deputy County Administrator

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I am a member of the National Association of Counties (NACo) and there have been many emails within this group discussion "all things COVID-19" when it comes to telecommuting and bringing employees back to work. No one on the email strings has indicated that they have any "technology tool or system" that is able to determine if staff members are working and being productive. Everyone has agreed that there is no tool for this, and the only way to ensure employees are working and being productive is to have managers/supervisors overseeing what the employees are doing to ensure the expected work is being accomplished. There is a portion of the IT industry whose sole mission is to train employees how to be successful at telecommuting, and to teach management how to manage employees that are telecommuting. We sent staff members away from the office to work from home with no prior planning, and so I can only assume for most departments, their level of productivity would reflect that.

DH