

Keep abreast of inappropriate behaviour by your employees

By Dermot Corrigan

While not generally the primary driver for the roll-out of web monitoring solutions, inappropriate internet and e-mail use by staff using company computers is a concern for many Irish businesses.

Such inappropriate use of an organisation's IT resources might range from relatively trivial matters such as comments on online forums or Facebook photos, to the production or downloading of illegal material.

Michael Conway, director of Renaissance Contingency Services, said that organisations had a legal responsibility to ensure that the workplace was safe and comforta-

ble for its employees. "Most worries that employers have with internet use are around productivity, but more serious issues probably arise more often than you might think," said Conway. "A staff member may be carrying out something which is illegal. If you do not have some means of managing appropriate use of the internet, you could be liable."

Jim Lehane, sales director at Espion Distribution, said that online bullying could be a serious issue where internet use was not adequately monitored. "Online bullying is just as common as offline bullying," said Lehane. "With the use of technology, inappropriate behaviour can be recognised, proven and halted. Implementing the technology forces the company to think about what is and is not acceptable behaviour."

Internet use policies must be updated regularly to keep abreast of the latest devel-

opments in communications technologies, said Damien Foley, chief executive of CMGi.

"The employee handbook needs to contain very clear guidelines on usage of the company systems," said Foley. "We find that, sometimes, companies do not update these policies and guidelines often enough. There might be guidelines in the handbook, but it would not include bullying via e-mail or social media."

E-mails should also be monitored for inappropriate usage or material, Conway said. "The acceptable usage policy would set down that the employer has the right to monitor e-mail and web usage, and may take action based on that," he said. "You may use your work e-mail for personal use if needs be, but you know that all the information contained is automatically recorded."