

MEMORANDUM

March 21, 2008

TO: Corey Booth
Chief Information Officer

FROM: H. David Kotz
Inspector General

SUBJECT: SafeSearch Filter on Internet Search Engines (No. 445)

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) continues to receive monthly referrals from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) of employees who have used their SEC-assigned computers to access Internet pornography in violation of Commission rules and policies and notwithstanding the agency's Internet filter. We have conducted investigations and inquiries into many of these referrals.¹

Several of the investigations and inquiries conducted by the OIG have revealed that SEC employees were able to access pornographic images by searching for images using Internet search engines such as Google and Yahoo and turning off the SafeSearch Filter feature. We understand from conversations with the OIT Security Group that technology is currently available that would enable OIT to prevent employees from turning off the SafeSearch Filter feature when searching for images on the Internet. In addition, as the OIT Security Group has acknowledged, new technology changes and tools may be developed to circumvent IT security policies that will require additional measures in the future.

We are recommending that the technology that will prevent employees from turning off the SafeSearch Filter be implemented expeditiously on a Commission-wide basis to further limit employees' ability to access pornographic images from their Commission computers. We are also recommending that the OIT Security Group continue to monitor new developments in technology in order to restrict employees' ability to circumvent the filters.

Recommendation A

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) should, on a Commission-wide basis, implement the necessary technology to prevent employees from turning off the SafeSearch Filter feature when searching for images on the Internet, and should continue to monitor new technological developments.

¹ The OIG issued a memorandum (No. 443) on November 15, 2007, making several recommendations designed to address the continued problem of SEC employees accessing Internet pornography from their Commission computers). These recommendations are still pending.

cc: Peter Uhlmann, Chief of Staff
Diego Ruiz, Executive Director
Brian Cartwright, General Counsel
Richard Humes, Associate General Counsel for Litigation and Administrative Practice
William Lenox, Ethics Counsel
Joseph Gerrity, Chief Information Security Officer
Dan Lisewski, Branch Chief for Information Resources Management
Jeffrey Risinger, Associate Executive Director for Human Resources
Darlene Pryor, Management Analyst, Office of Executive Director