



E-Government Advisory Committee Proposed Policy Statement

Among the many issues discussed by the 2006 JCOTS E-Government Advisory Committee, the members of the committee identified the topics of privacy and security as particularly ripe for further study and review.

The group focused on the interrelationship of privacy and security, especially for government entities in the Commonwealth that are increasingly turning towards e-government solutions. Despite this relationship, privacy and security refer to two distinct ideas:

- ◆ Privacy relates to sensitive and personal information that should not be subject to public disclosure -- such as tax data or medical information. What information is deemed private is most often proscribed by law. For example, § 58.1-3 of the Code of Virginia makes it illegal for the Department of Taxation to share personal tax information, except in specified circumstances.
- ◆ Security relates to securing bits and bytes of data from unauthorized access. Keeping the Commonwealth's data, databases, and IT infrastructure secure most often rests with technology standards developed to support the law.

A key difference between privacy and security is their rate of change. The laws relating to privacy are set by the General Assembly, and are often slow to evolve and change. Security, on the other hand, is a constantly evolving notion that must remain flexible in order to address changes and advancements in technology and technological threats.

The E-Government Advisory Committee suggests that the Joint Commission on Technology & Science adopt this policy statement highlighting the differences between privacy and security, while at the same time recognizing the interrelationship that must be maintained in establishing security standards designed to protect private data. Keeping the relationship between privacy and security clear is a key part of any discussion about keeping the Commonwealth's infrastructure and databases secure. It is essential that the state develop security standards that protect the privacy of citizens of the Commonwealth, and that such standards are effectively implemented at the agency level.

The Advisory Committee also recommends that the Joint Commission on Technology & Science continue to study issues relating to privacy and security, and other e-government issues, during the 2007 Interim.