

Advertising on Janet

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A number of queries about advertising on the network are referred to the Jisc helpdesk every year. Some commercial activity on the Janet Network is permitted, provided it complies with the policies set for the network by its funders. In particular section 14 of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) states that Janet may not be used by a User Organisation or its Members for:

Creation or transmission of unsolicited bulk or marketing material to users of networked facilities or services, save where that material is embedded within, or is otherwise part of, a service to which the user or their User Organisation has chosen to subscribe.

The AUP may be found at: [ji.sc/policies](https://www.jisc.ac.uk/policies) ^[1].

This factsheet explains why the restrictions on advertising on the Janet Network exist, and provides details of the way in which this policy has been interpreted.

Why are there restrictions?

Restrictions have to exist because the Janet Network is funded by public money for the specific purposes of research and education. If the network were to lose this special nature and carry a mixture of traffic there would be little justification for Government funding.

Another factor that has to be considered is the Janet Network's status as a private network. Private networks have certain advantages over public networks: in particular they are subject to fewer regulatory requirements, which allows the network operators to design and operate Janet to best suit its research and education role.

Overt commercial activity on the Janet Network could threaten the status of the network and lead to a loss of these benefits.

What is permitted?

The AUP permits any lawful activity that is in furtherance of the aims and policies of the user

organisation, provided that it does not contravene any of clauses 8 to 16. Permitted activities may be either not for profit or involve financial gain. Advertising can therefore only be permitted if it is not unsolicited and is in furtherance of the organisation's aims.

In general, advertising must not be used in a way that creates additional traffic on the Janet network. The only exception to this rule is where advertising forms part of software or a service to which a Janet site has subscribed: e.g., when software is purchased online it is a common requirement that users receive information about updates and new products.

The following sections give some examples of advertising that may be permitted.

Acknowledging sponsors

Many organisations and services with a connection to the Janet network obtain sponsorship from commercial companies. In these circumstances it is acceptable to display a small icon or logo relating to the sponsor on the Janet-connected site's web pages. It is also acceptable to provide a link to the sponsor's web site and include a brief message acknowledging their support. In this instance the advertising is passive in that the user has to click on the link to access the sponsor's web site.

Advertising services and products

Connected sites can use the Janet network for commercial and marketing purposes relating to their own products and services. Some Janet-connected sites have used their web pages to market courseware and teaching materials, or software packages developed by their staff and students. Many universities and colleges also advertise their conference facilities and the availability of student accommodation for rent during the holidays on Janet-connected sites. In each case the activities are deemed to be acceptable under the AUP because they are *"in furtherance of the missions of the Connected Organisation"*.

Icons on web pages

Icons or logos relating to commercial companies are now seen on a number of web pages hosted on the Janet Network. This type of advertising is typically used for the following purposes:

- careers services provide links to the web sites of commercial companies that offer graduate job opportunities;
- some organisations promote services provided by commercial companies for students: e.g., a bookstore offering discounts;
- business departments acknowledge collaborative ventures with commercial companies.

However, this type of advertising is only permitted where the user has to choose to click on the link to access the commercial web site.

Advertising banners

Small advertising banners are permitted on Janet-connected web sites, provided either:

- both the banner and the link to the advertiser's site are stored locally on the web server of the organisation with the Janet connection, or
- where an item is downloaded, the download does not compromise the activities of other users on the Janet Network.

It is not acceptable to link to advertising material stored on a commercial database that is pulled into the Janet Network as a web page loads, unless an organisation has decided that it is in its interest to do so.

Advertising in newsletters

The Jisc helpdesk has received a number of enquiries about the publication of student news-sheets containing adverts on Janet Network hosted web sites. In each case it was agreed that this was acceptable provided:

- the advertising was passive, i.e. the user had to click on the links to access the commercial web sites
- the news-sheet remained on the web
- no attempt was made to send this information to mailing lists (this would be classed as unsolicited email).

Advertising in email

Sending unsolicited marketing emails is prohibited both by law and by the AUP. As with websites, however, it may be permissible to include marketing of an organisation's own products and services in emails sent for other purposes. This will only be allowed if the marketing is clearly subsidiary to the main purpose of the email (making marketing content too prominent also increases the risk of an important email being deleted either by the recipient or their anti-spam filter).

Those wishing to include marketing in emails are reminded that this is also subject to the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). It is important to consult with a legal expert to ensure you are fully compliant with these and other relevant laws.

Further information

This factsheet can only provide general guidelines about the type of advertising that is currently considered to be acceptable on the Janet Network. If you require specific advice please contact help@jisc.ac.uk ^[2].

Source URL: <https://community.jisc.ac.uk/library/advertising-janet>

Links

[1] <http://ji.sc/policies>

[2] <mailto:help@jisc.ac.uk>