

# City of Los Angeles

California

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March 11, 2013

REF: EXE-061-2013

Honorable Members of the City Council  
City of Los Angeles  
Room 395, City Hall  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Information Technology and General Services Committee

Subject: **CITY INTERNET OUTAGE (CF NO. 13-0239)**

Dear Councilmembers:

Pursuant to City Council Motion (Perry/Parks), Council File No. 13-0239, the Information Technology Agency (ITA) is submitting the following report regarding the City's February 12, 2013 Internet outage, identifying the problems that contributed to it, and providing recommendations for improvements that may prevent or minimize similar incidents in the future.

## BACKGROUND

On February 12, 2013, at approximately 3:15 pm, the City's Internet network connection reached capacity as a result of City staff accessing external streaming audio and video content. The notably high volume of City audio and video streaming coincided with the final hours of the Christopher Dorner manhunt. As a response to this problem, the ITA staff were quickly able to switch over to the secondary Internet provider location and restore service at approximately 6:30 pm.

The City's current Internet Usage Policy does not restrict/block employee access to streaming audio or video content nor social media sites.

## FINDINGS

- Largest use of the City's network capacity is from employee access to Internet streaming audio and video on any given day;
- Previous outage of this nature occurred during the funeral procession of Michael Jackson;
- Validated that police and fire dispatch operations, emergency operations and command centers were not adversely affected by the outage;
- Validated that although the City's current Internet Usage Policy does explicitly state that "employees internet use should be limited to City business only" it does



not state that blocking employee access to streaming content and social media is done by the City;

- Validated Primary and secondary internet services are adequately sized for the City, however they could be further optimized to increase performance and scalability;
- Internet outages impacted employee productivity as a result of not being able to access critical business applications including Google e-mail and shared documents;
- Time Warner provided immediate response to switch to a high speed secondary service to assist in resolving the February 12, 2013 capacity issue;

#### **ACTIONS COMPLETED**

- Contacted the City's network equipment manufacturer, Cisco, for preliminary network assessment to validate ITA findings and remediation;
- Met with City Attorney and City Administrative Office to discuss possible changes to the City's Internet Usage Policy that is intended to be signed by every City employee, that would include restricting access to streaming media and social media sites unless approved by the Department Head;

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

ITA is committed to ensuring high availability of Internet access for City staff within the boundaries of the city budget. Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. ITA with assistance of the City Attorney, City Administrative Officer, and Personnel Department draft an updated City Internet Usage policy to block employee access to Internet streaming audio and video content as well as social media sites. Propose that staff exemptions must be approved by Department Heads or Elected Officials.
2. ITA identify resources necessary to implement a monthly employee internet usage reporting system that would enable department management to ensure appropriate internet access usage by staff;
3. ITA utilize the current network vendor to conduct an assessment of the City's network design to optimize the internet access services to increase performance and stability; this would include recommendations for load balancing and scalability to achieve a 99.999% availability for City departments;
4. ITA work with the LAFD and LAPD to implement redundant Internet access for the 9-1-1 dispatch centers to avoid impact of future Internet outages;
5. Work with LAPD to isolate their network traffic on its own firewall to reduce the impact on non-law enforcement impact.

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The information and recommendations provided herein will provide improvements to ensure the high availability of Internet access for City Departments and Elected Offices. Please contact me or Mr. Greg Steinmehl, Interim Assistant General Manager, at (213) 978-3311, should you have any questions or require additional information.

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Reneker  
General Manager

cc: Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa, Mayor  
Eileen Decker, Deputy Mayor  
Monique Earl, Deputy Mayor  
Miguel Santana, City Administrative Officer  
Gerry Miller, Chief Legislative Analyst  
Carmen A. Trutanich, City Attorney  
Maggie Whelan, General Manager, Personnel Department  
Information Technology Policy Committee

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