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Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places—

Steamy E-mail May Be Heating Up the Network This Valentine's Day

You Never Know Who Is Reading Your Sexy Online Valentines, Warns Pearl Software

Philadelphia, PA — February 10, 2003 — Before you send that racy e-mail to your hard-working sweetheart, consider who might be reading it, warns Pearl Software, a Philadelphia software firm that manufactures software for businesses to manage employee Internet use. According to Pearl, employers often get an eye-full when they closely examine workers' e-mail correspondence.

"Studies show that although employees know their Internet activity is being monitored, many don't take it seriously. I think most employees would skip sending e-valentines if they knew how much online activity is visible to their bosses," said David A. Fertell, CEO of Pearl Software. "Our clients have shared instances where people were horrified to discover their frequent forays to adult sites or kinky e-mail to spouses were easily viewed by those managing the corporate network."

"Well over 50 percent of companies now filter or monitor employees' e-mail," says Frederick S. Lane, author of *The Naked Employee: How Technology Is Compromising Workplace Privacy*. "An X-rated valentine could get your boyfriend in trouble, or at the very least could land him on his company's watch list."

E-mail isn't the only medium being watched. Internet monitoring tools like Pearl Echo can also monitor web browsing, file transfers, news group postings, chat, web-chat, web-mail, and now forms of instant messaging (IM).

"Employees' personal use of instant messaging on company time is one of the chief reasons that businesses are looking to exercise some control over their IM systems," said Christopher Saunders, Managing Editor of InstantMessagingPlanet.com, an online magazine focusing on the

enterprise side of IM. "I expect Valentine's Day, like most holidays, will spawn higher-than-normal levels of instant messaging activity."

Some overworked employees justify cyber flirting as a welcome break to their long hours on the job. Problems arise, however, when online romance robs companies of valuable network bandwidth or when workers visit non-work related web sites during unauthorized times, Fertell said, resulting in lost productivity. "We don't mean to shoot Cupid with his own arrow, but who can afford to put their job or their company at risk these days?" asked Fertell.

Pearl Software strongly urges companies that purchase Pearl Echo to put an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) in place, clearly outlining to employees which non-work-related Internet activities are permissible during work hours. "Just as a company adopts a policy on dress code and behavior, companies need guidelines for acceptable Internet use," said Fertell.

Frederick Lane agrees. "Companies need to divulge what types of tools are being used so that employees can make informed decisions about what they do online in the workplace."

Many companies are now using products like Pearl Echo to enforce an AUP by controlling how and when employees use the 'Net. For example, with Pearl Echo you can allow personal e-mail or online shopping during lunchtime or after work.

David Fertell and Joe Field founded Pearl Software Inc. in 1996. The company provides network-enabled products to the growing Internet user community. Pearl Software's key, patent-pending products include Pearl Echo® and Cyber Snoop® Desktop, which allows parents and educators to monitor children's online activity. The company also offers browser control software, TakeMeHome™, and is commercializing an emergency chat response system, Chat911™. More information about Pearl Software is available at www.pearlsw.com

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