

# **Tallahassee Voices\***

## **Survey on Workplace Emails**

\*A pro-bono project by Kerr & Downs Research and the *Tallahassee Democrat*

## *Tallahassee Voices* Survey on Workplace Emails

Almost half of Leon County residents (48%) believe it is a mistake that should be punished in some manner (for government employees) to send emails with sexually suggestive or explicit material on company computers during work hours.<sup>1</sup> Slightly more than four in ten residents (42%) believe the same standard should hold for employees of private companies. One in five County residents (19%) believe government employees should be terminated for sending sexually explicit emails on company computers during work hours, while one in seven residents (15%) believe the same should hold for employees of private companies. One in four residents (26%) believe that such actions made by private-sector employees are a mistake, but only deserve a verbal warning, while slightly fewer residents (22%) believe government employees should only receive a warning. A slim margin of residents (6-7%) believed that sending sexually suggestive/explicit emails on company computers during work hours does not deserve any punishment, whether the emails are sent by government employees or otherwise.

Half of the survey respondents in this panel (50%) are government employees at some level. Slightly fewer than half of Leon County residents (48%) have ever received an email with sexually suggestive or explicit material during work hours from a friend or co-worker, yet only 17% of residents admit to sending or forwarding such emails. One in five area residents (22%) has been offended by an email with sexually suggestive or explicit material received during work hours from a friend or co-worker.

One in five residents (20%) describes receiving a sexually explicit email during work hours as, “mildly irritating, but no big deal,” and slightly fewer residents (18%) describe such emails as, “just more spam, easy to delete.” One in ten County residents (9%) states that sending sexually suggestive or explicit emails is ok because, “everybody needs a laugh once in a while,” and the same percentage (9%) claim, “It makes me mad.”

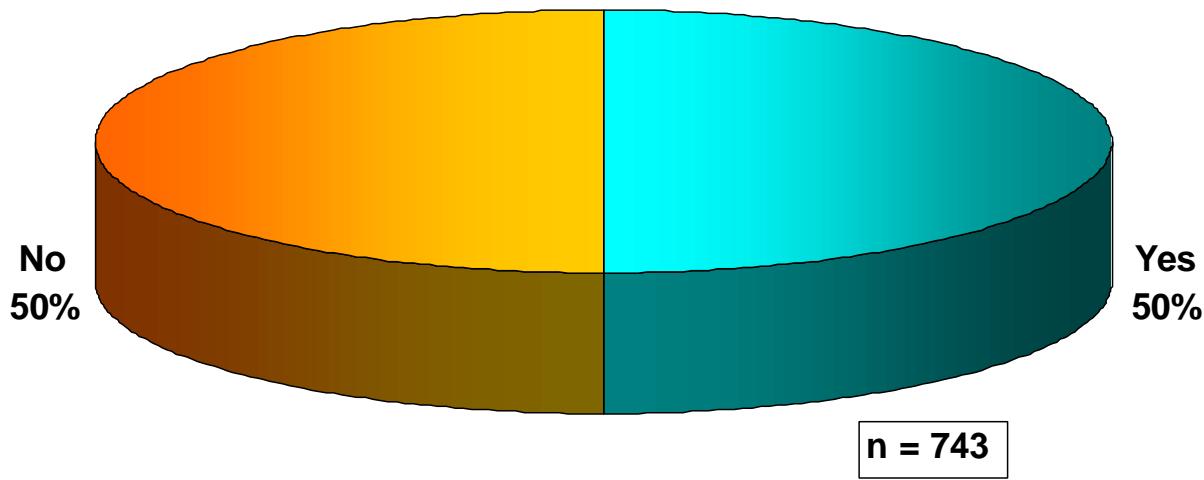
Four in nine Leon County residents (44%) define inappropriate email sent or received during work hours as, “anything containing nudity or sexually suggestive/explicit material.” Three in ten residents (29%) claim that any emails not related to work are inappropriate to send or receive during work hours, while slightly less than one in five residents (18%) deem anything that may offend the recipient to be inappropriate. One in eight area residents (12%) name racist or sexist emails inappropriate. Religious emails and emails that contain foul or vulgar language are both deemed inappropriate to send or receive during work hours by seven percent of area residents. The same percentage of County residents (7%) describe, “Anything I wouldn’t show my family/boss” to be an inappropriate email. One in twenty area residents (4%) believe political emails are inappropriate in the workplace, while two percent of residents quoted former Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart by saying, “you know it when you see it.”

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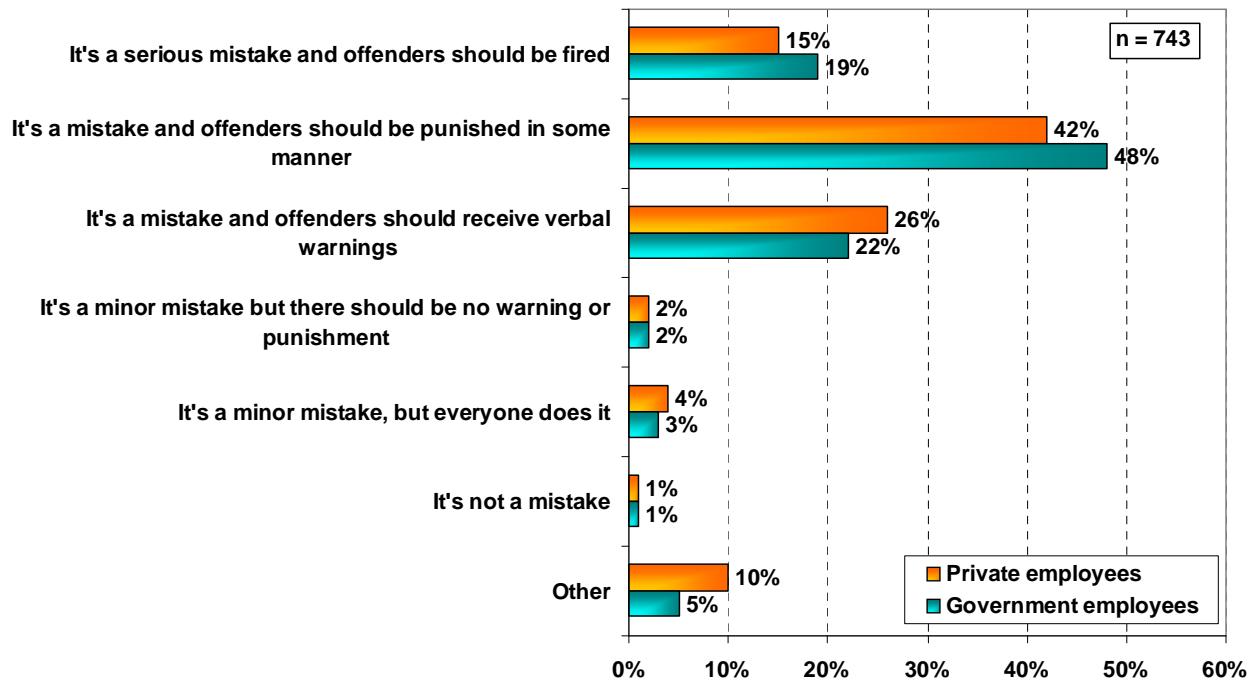
<sup>1</sup> Results are from a June 2005 *Tallahassee Voices* Internet Survey Panel, a pro bono project jointly sponsored by Kerr & Downs Research and the *Tallahassee Democrat*. The panel contains over 2,500 local residents; 743 responded to the Survey on Workplace Emails. The panel under represents minorities (16%), younger residents (26%) and low-income households (18%). However in this study, most results did not vary significantly based on race/ethnic background, age, and income.

*To become a panel member, go to [www.tallahasseevoices.com](http://www.tallahasseevoices.com).*

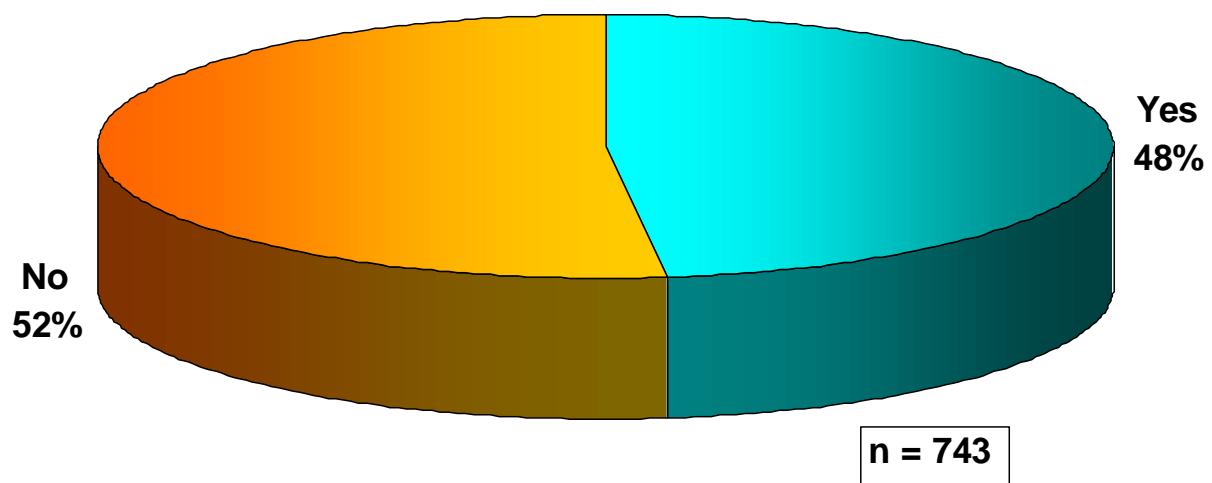
## Do you work for the government at any level?



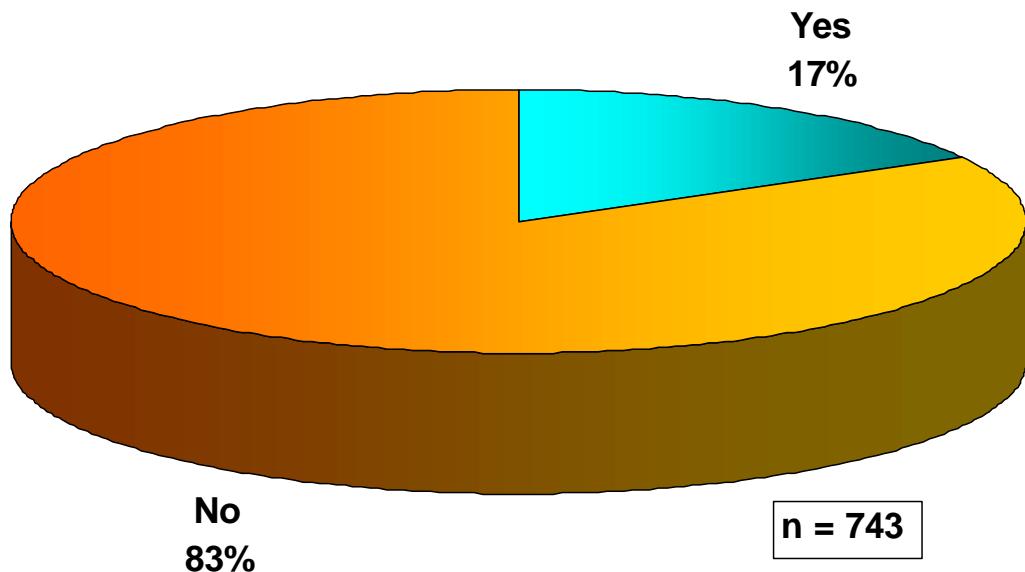
## How do you feel about employees of private companies and government employees sending emails with sexually suggestive or explicit material on company computers during work hours?



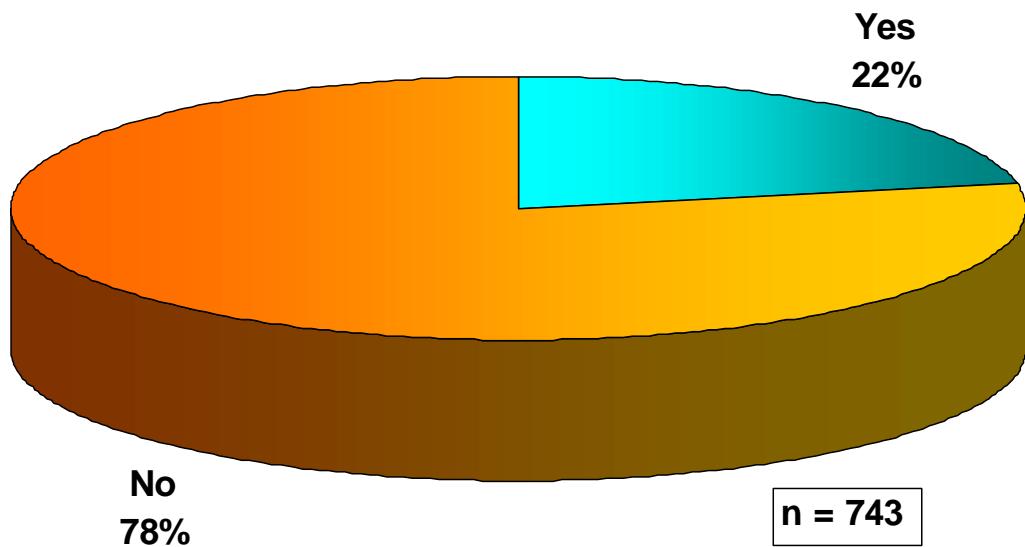
**Have you ever received an email with sexually suggestive or explicit material during work hours from a friend or co-worker?**



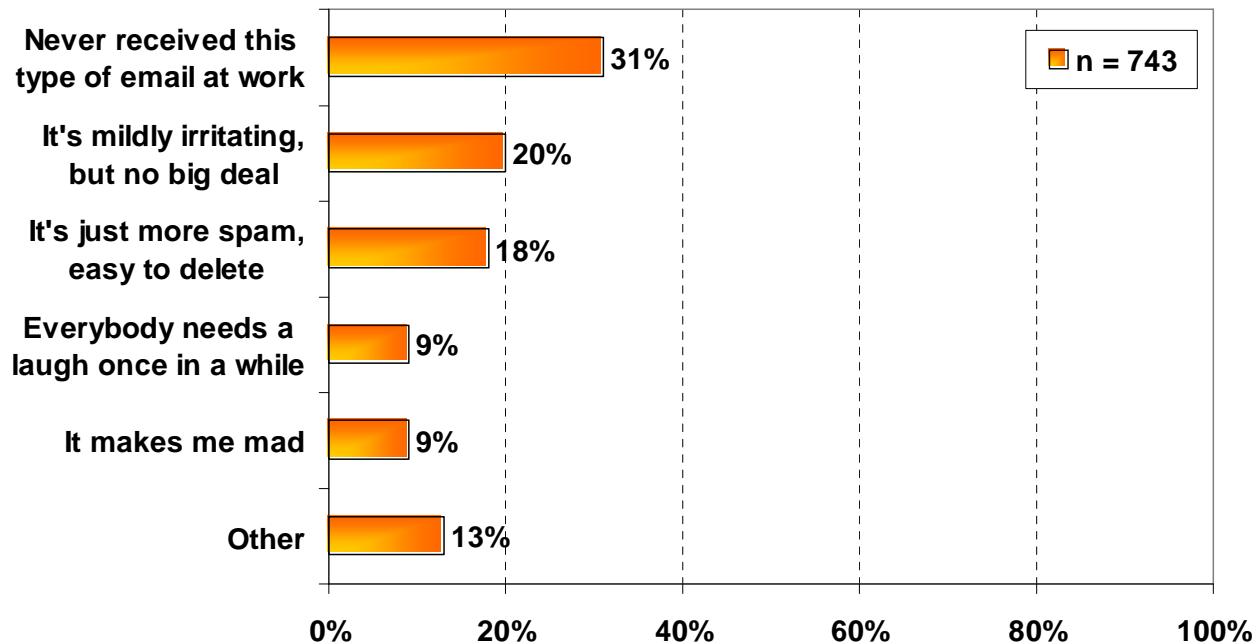
**Have you ever sent or forwarded an email with sexually suggestive or explicit material to a friend or co-worker during work hours?**



**Have you ever been offended by an email with sexually suggestive or explicit material you received during work hours from a friend or co-worker?**



**Which of the following best describes your feelings toward emails with sexually suggestive or explicit material received at work sent by friends or co-workers?**



**How would you define an "inappropriate" email send or received during work hours?**

