



16th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures

Report on the Evaluation of the
Use of Laptop Computers in the
Legislative Assembly

Chair: Mr. Robert Hawkins, MLA

MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RULES AND PROCEDURES

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Legislative Assembly
Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures

June 1, 2009

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to provide its Report on the Evaluation of the Use of Laptop Computers in the Legislative Assembly and commends it to the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Hawkins".

Robert Hawkins, MLA
Chairperson

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND PROCEDURES**

**REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE
USE OF LAPTOP COMPUTERS IN THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures tabled Committee Report 3-16(3), Report on the Use of Laptop Computers and Blackberry Devices, in the Legislative Assembly on February 11, 2009.

The Report examined a number of issues pertaining to the use of portable electronic devices by both Members of the Assembly and our staff, in the performance of our duties.

As a result of the review, Committee Motion 3-16(3) was adopted in Committee of the Whole on February 19, 2009. The motion allowed for the use of laptop computers during Committee of the Whole proceedings for the Winter 2009 Session and also set out the requirement that the use of laptop computers be evaluated at the end of that sitting. The Motion further stated that communication devices could not be used by a Member who has the floor, and that a Member who has the floor must have his or her laptop computer closed.

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures conducted an evaluation with regard to laptop use prior to the current sitting of the House. The Committee contacted each Member of the Assembly and asked that they help to determine the next steps by indicating their support from a list of various courses of action. The options were:

1. That the Rules of the Legislative Assembly be permanently amended to allow for the use of laptop computers in Committee of the Whole proceedings;
2. That the Assembly continue permitting the use of laptop computers during Committee of the Whole proceedings on a trial basis, evaluating their use again in the fall of 2009, at which time additional infrastructure information may be available; or
3. That the use of laptop computers be discontinued during Committee of the Whole proceedings.

Eleven Members responded to the survey. Three Members chose option number one, seven Members chose option number two and one Member chose option number three.

Based on these results, the Standing Committee is recommending that the Assembly continue to permit the use of laptop computers in Committee of the Whole proceedings for the balance of the 2009 calendar year, to be followed by a full evaluation. The Committee is also recommending that the same conditions previously applied for laptop use be extended during this period.

As a result of these deliberations, the Committee is pleased to make the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1

That the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends Members be permitted to continue use of laptop computers during Committee of the Whole proceedings for the balance of the 2009 calendar year, after which their use will be fully evaluated;

And further, that hand-held and other portable communication devices are not to be used by a Member who has the floor;

And furthermore, that a Member who has the floor must have their laptop computer closed.