

Entrepreneur

| ASK A PRO |

GOOFING OFF ONLINE

Q: How do I monitor employees' personal use of technology during work hours?

A: Nancy Flynn, founder and executive director of the ePolicy Institute, advises entrepreneurs to follow the three E's.

- **Establish a formal policy.** This should clarify with whom employees can communicate during the workday, for how long and for what basic reasons. "You cannot expect employees to be compliant if they don't know what the rules are," Flynn says. "You want to incorporate personal-use rules in every policy."
- **Educate your staff.** With a policy in place, Flynn says, companies must train employees in digital dos and don'ts. Make sure, for example, that they know the risk of disparaging the boss on social media or of e-mailing an inappropriately racy joke to a co-worker. Once training is completed, "the likelihood that employees will post content in violation of your policy is really reduced."
- **Enforce the rules.** Beyond simple observance and discipline, this may require technology such as monitoring software—a minimal expenditure compared to the cost of a lawsuit. —*Christopher Hann*

