

Proposed Model Jury Instructions
The Use of Electronic Technology to Conduct Research on
or Communicate about a Case

Prepared by the Judicial Conference Committee on
Court Administration and Case Management
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[Note: These instructions should be provided to jurors before trial, at the close of a case, at the end of each day before jurors return home, and other times, as appropriate.]

Before Trial:

You, as jurors, must decide this case based solely on the evidence presented here within the four walls of this courtroom. This means that during the trial you must not conduct any independent research about this case, the matters in the case, and the individuals or corporations involved in the case. In other words, you should not consult dictionaries or reference materials, search the internet, websites, blogs, or use any other electronic tools to obtain information about this case or to help you decide the case. Please do not try to find out information from any source outside the confines of this courtroom.

Until you retire to deliberate, you may not discuss this case with anyone, even your fellow jurors. After you retire to deliberate, you may begin discussing the case with your fellow jurors, but you cannot discuss the case with anyone else until you have returned a verdict and the case is at an end.

I know that many of you use cell phones, Blackberries, the internet and other tools of technology. You also must not talk to anyone at any time about this case or use these tools to communicate electronically with anyone about the case. This includes your family and friends. You may not communicate with anyone about the case on your cell phone, through e-mail, Blackberry, iPhone, text messaging, or on Twitter, through any blog or website, including Facebook, Google+, My Space, LinkedIn, or YouTube. You may not use any similar technology of social media, even if I have not specifically mentioned it here. I expect you will inform me as soon as you become aware of another juror's violation of these instructions.

I hope that for all of you this case is interesting and noteworthy.

At the Close of the Case:

During your deliberations, you must not communicate with or provide any information to anyone by any means about this case. You may not use any electronic device or media, such as the telephone, a cell phone, smart phone, iPhone, Blackberry or computer, the Internet, any Internet service, any text or instant messaging service, any Internet chat room, blog, or website such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, YouTube or Twitter, to communicate to anyone any information about this case or to conduct any research about this case until I accept your verdict. In other words, you cannot talk to anyone on the phone, correspond with anyone, or electronically communicate with anyone about this case. You can only discuss the case in the jury room with your fellow jurors during deliberations. I expect you will inform me as soon as you become aware of another juror's violation of these instructions.

You may not use these electronic means to investigate or communicate about the case because it is important that you decide this case based solely on the evidence presented in this courtroom. Information on the internet or available through social media might be wrong, incomplete, or inaccurate. You are only permitted to discuss the case with your fellow jurors during deliberations because they have seen and heard the same evidence you have. In our judicial system, it is important that you are not influenced by anything or anyone outside of this courtroom. Otherwise, your decision may be based on information known only by you and not your fellow jurors or the parties in the case. This would unfairly and adversely impact the judicial process.