

Walker Knew about “Secret” Email System at Milwaukee County

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GREEN BAY - According to a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel [report](#) , included in more than 27,000 emails unsealed today is one that for the first time directly ties Gov. Scott Walker to a secret email system used in his office when he was Milwaukee County executive.

Court documents have previously showed Walker's aides set up a secret wireless router in the county executive's office and traded emails that mixed county and campaign business on Gmail and Yahoo accounts.

I can report that Walker knew about this system as far back as 2002. How do I know? I helped Tim Russell set it up.

Back in 2002, I was called to the newly elected Walker's office to meet with Tim Russell, who was being promoted at the time as the “technology expert” for the new County Executive . Russell wanted to know how he could set up a private computer network within that office which would have its own link to the internet.

Former County Executive Dave Schultz had such an office system with Apple Computers back in 1988-92, but F. Thomas Ament had dumped it when he became Executive because too many of Schultz's emails had found their way to the pages of the Journal Sentinel. Ament and his top Administrators tended to distrust the new technology and were more secretive than the Schultz people.

During the 1990s, I was responsible for technology in the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and had set up a departmental network with email and a web site with it's own ISDN line

link to the internet. We were one of several county departments who had moved in this direction in the 90s in advance of a countywide system later developed by the central Information Management Services Division (IMSD).

DHR was only one floor below the County Executive’s Office in the Courthouse, and Tim Russell wanted to know how I did it. During our meeting in 2002, I told him.

As I remember, Russell told me that Scott Walker was very appreciative of my help and wanted to thank me personally. Russell took me over to Walker’s office for the meet and greet, but he turned out to be busy and only smiled and waved from his desk as we stood outside his office door.

I have no doubt that Walker knew what he was smiling and waving about. Russell had certainly made it clear that we were doing this at Walker’s bidding.

I have not really talked much about that day over the years and was not contacted about this information during the recent John Doe inquiry. That I assisted other departments within the county on technology issues during this period was certainly no secret at the time.

But I can tell you one thing, if Walker continues to deny knowledge of this email system and its usage, he is giving you a line of baloney.

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