



GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS:

PRIVACY: GOVERNMENT USE OF DATA FROM INFORMATION RESELLERS COULD INCLUDE BETTER PROTECTIONS

Linda D. Koontz. Director. Information Management Issues. Government Accountability Office (GAO). Testimony before the Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, U.S. House of Representatives. March 11, 2008. 29 pages.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08543t.pdf>

Federal agencies collect and use personal information for various purposes from information resellers -- companies that amass and sell data from many sources. For example, in fiscal year 2005, the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and State and the Social Security Administration reported that they used personal information obtained from resellers for a variety of purposes, including performing criminal investigations, locating witnesses and fugitives, researching assets held by individuals of interest, and detecting prescription drug fraud. GAO was asked to determine how the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and State and the Social Security Administration used this data and to review the extent to which agencies' policies and practices for handling this information reflected the Fair Information Practices, a set of widely accepted principles for protecting the privacy and security of personal data. GAO was also asked to provide an update on the implementation status of earlier recommendations and to comment on provisions of the proposed Federal Agency Data Protection Act.

PROTECTING CONSUMERS IN THE NEXT TECH-ADE

Federal Trade Commission (FTC). March 2008. 50 pages.

<http://www.ftc.gov/os/2008/03/P064101tech.pdf>

Technological developments will re-shape the marketplace over the coming ten years, changing consumers' everyday experiences in significant ways. While the anticipated pace of change and scope of developments undoubtedly are impressive, technological change is not a new phenomenon. Over the past decades, society has realized great benefits from technology: the introduction of timesaving devices, expedited methods of transacting business, and increased access to information and entertainment among them. In some cases, these new technologies -- or business practices enabled by them -- have harmed consumers. That hurdles lie ahead in the coming decade is certain. Businesses, consumers, and law enforcers alike will have to be ready to meet these challenges, and work collaboratively to ensure that the benefits of technology are not overshadowed.

TELEPHONE PENETRATION BY INCOME BY STATE: DATA THROUGH MARCH 2007

Alexander Belinfante. Industry Analysis and Technology Division. Wireline Competition Bureau. Federal Communications Commission (FCC). March 2008. 85 pages.

http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-280982A1.pdf

This report presents data on telephone penetration levels on a state-by-state basis for various income categories. The report is designed to help assess the effects of federal and state support mechanisms that defray the cost of telephone service for low-income consumers. The most widely used measure of telephone subscribership is the percentage of households with telephone service, sometimes called a measure of telephone penetration. The number and percentage of households that have telephone service is the most fundamental measure of the success of U.S. universal service policies. Continuing analysis of telephone penetration statistics allows to examine the effects of these policies on households' decisions to maintain, acquire, or discontinue telephone service.

1710-1755 MHZ SPECTRUM BAND RELOCATION: FIRST ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
U.S. Department of Commerce. March 2008. 28 pages.

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/reports/2008/SpectrumRelocation2008.pdf>

This report is submitted pursuant to Section 207 of the Commercial Spectrum Enhancement Act (CSEA, Title II of P.L. 108-494), which requires annual reporting on federal agencies' progress in vacating their affected wireless communications systems, which are being relocated from certain radio spectrum that has been reallocated to commercial use. This is the first such annual report, and it details progress from the commencement of relocation activity in March 2007 through December 2007.

CYBERCRIME: AN OVERVIEW OF THE FEDERAL COMPUTER FRAUD AND ABUSE
STATUTE AND RELATED FEDERAL CRIMINAL LAWS

Charles Doyle. Congressional Research Service (CRS). February 25, 2008. 100 pages.

http://ipmall.info/hosted_resources/crs/97-1025_080225.pdf

The federal computer fraud and abuse statute, 18 U.S.C. 1030, outlaws conduct that victimizes computer systems. It is a computer security law that protects computers in which there is a federal interest -- federal computers, bank computers, and computers used in interstate and foreign commerce. It shields them from trespassing, threats, damage, espionage, and from being corruptly used as instruments of fraud. It is not a comprehensive provision; instead it fills gaps in the protection afforded by other state and federal criminal laws. It is a work that over the last two decades Congress has kneaded, reworked, recast, and amended to bolster the uncertain coverage of more general federal trespassing, threat, malicious mischief, fraud, and espionage statutes.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: FCC HAS MADE SOME PROGRESS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF
ITS ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM BUT FACES LIMITATIONS, AND ADDITIONAL ACTIONS
ARE NEEDED

Government Accountability Office (GAO). Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, Committee on Energy and Commerce, U.S. House of Representatives. February 2008. 58 pages.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08125.pdf>

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) annually receives about 100,000 complaints from individuals and companies. FCC has the authority to investigate these complaints and take enforcement action if it finds a violation of the telecommunications laws and rules, which are designed to ensure, for example, that individuals have access to 911 services and a wider affordable range of communication

services. As requested, this report reviews FCC's enforcement program and summarizes the number and type of complaints received, investigations conducted, and enforcement actions taken by FCC from 2003 through 2006; discusses how FCC assesses the impact of its enforcement program; and discusses challenges FCC faces in providing complete and accurate information on its enforcement program.

TELEPHONE SUBSCRIBERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES: DATA THROUGH JULY 2007

Alexander Belinfante. Industry Analysis and Technology Division. Wireline Competition Bureau. Federal Communications Commission (FCC). February 2008. 51 pages.

http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-279997A1.pdf

This report on telephone subscribership in the United States presents subscribership statistics based on the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the Census Bureau in July 2007. Based on the data gathered in that survey, the FCC estimates that in July 2007, the telephone subscribership penetration rate in the U.S. was 95.0%, an increase of 0.4% over the rate from July 2006. This report also shows subscribership levels by state, income level, race, age, household size, and employment status.

NETWORKED NATION: BROADBAND IN AMERICA 2007

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). U.S. Department of Commerce. January 2008. 60 pages.

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/reports/2008/NetworkedNationBroadbandinAmerica2007.pdf>

This report examines the comprehensive package of technology, regulatory, and fiscal policies implemented by the U.S. Administration to lower barriers to investment and create an environment in which broadband innovation and competition can flourish. It finds that for the last four years, the United States has witnessed remarkable results in the growth of the broadband marketplace and the proliferation of broadband platforms and service options: according to the FCC's 2006 data, broadband service was available in 99 percent of the nation's zip codes, encompassing 99 percent of the nation's population; since President Bush took office, the total number of broadband lines in the United States has grown by more than 1,100 percent from almost 6.8 million lines in December 2000, to 82.5 million in December 2006; by December 2006, 91.5 percent of ZIP codes had three or more competing service providers and more than 50 percent of the nation's ZIP codes had six or more competitors.

THINK TANKS AND RESEARCH CENTERS:

The opinions expressed in these publications do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Government

THE WEB: ALARMING, APPEALING AND A CHALLENGE TO JOURNALISTIC VALUES

The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press and Project for Excellence in Journalism. March 17, 2008. 63 pages.

<http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/403.pdf>

The financial crisis facing news organizations is so grave that it is now overshadowing concerns about the quality of news coverage, the flagging credibility of the news media, and other problems that have been very much on the minds of journalists over the past decade. For many, the financial problems confronting journalism are directly tied to the rise of journalism on the Internet. Overall, 16% of national journalists -- including 26% of those working in print -- cite the current business model for journalism, or

the specific challenge of making a profit from web journalism, as the most important problem facing journalism.

THE WELFARE IMPACTS OF BROADBAND NETWORK MANAGEMENT: CAN BROADBAND SERVICE PROVIDERS BE TRUSTED?

George S. Ford, Thomas M. Koutsy and Lawrence J. Spiwak. Phoenix Center for Advanced Legal & Economic Public Policy Studies. Policy Paper Number 32. March 2008. 20 pages.

<http://www.phoenix-center.org/pcpp/PCPP32Final.pdf>

The extent to which broadband Internet service providers can engage in “reasonable traffic management” when faced with potentially congestion-causing applications like BitTorrent or other file-sharing applications is currently the subject of heated debate. This paper provides a formal economic analysis of the likely welfare consequences of broadband Internet network management that is directed at controlling network congestion. The authors show that it is socially desirable to charge a congestion premium or utilize other traffic management techniques when congestion-causing applications impose a congestion externality and degrade the experience of other users. The most efficient traffic management actions would be targeted at applications that cause congestion externalities and not upon all applications generally. The model also suggests congestion externalities caused by applications may vary depending upon network capacity constraints and protocols. As a result, assessment of the reasonableness of network management practices is most logical on a case-by-case basis rather than imposition of a single “bright-line” test. Instead, this model indicates that if it is shown that a congestion externality is present and that a traffic management tool directly remedies that externality, it is appropriate to presume that this type of traffic management by a private firm is legitimate and welfare enhancing.

MOBILE ACCESS TO DATA AND INFORMATION

John Horrigan. The Pew Internet & American Life Project. Data Memo. March 2008. 12 pages.

http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Mobile.Data.Access.pdf

62% of all Americans are part of a wireless, mobile population that participates in digital activities away from home or work. 58% of adult Americans have used a cell phone or personal digital assistant (PDA) to do at least one of ten mobile non-voice data activities, such as texting, emailing, taking a picture, looking for maps or directions, or recording video. 41% of adult Americans have logged onto the Internet on the go, that is, away from home or work either with a wireless laptop connection or a handheld device.

SEEDING THE CLOUD: WHAT MOBILE ACCESS MEANS FOR USAGE PATTERNS AND ONLINE CONTENT

John Horrigan. The Pew Internet & American Life Project. Memo. March 2008. 2 pages.

http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Users.and.Cloud.pdf

There is a demographically diverse group of Americans who already take advantage of mobile access to data and information. With “cloud computing” on the horizon -- whereby applications and data storage move away from the desktop or laptop to remote servers managed by high-speed networks -- the make-up of the population of mobile users offers a distinctive opportunity for encouraging a vibrant cyberspace for the future.

PRIVACY IMPLICATIONS OF FAST, MOBILE INTERNET ACCESS

Susannah Fox. The Pew Internet & American Life Project. Memo. February 13, 2008. 2 pages.
http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/Privacy_Fast_Mobile_Access.pdf

Much of the Internet's impact on American society has been positive, as people are able to connect with each other and with information much more efficiently than ever before. But cracks in the foundation of trust have been widening as more people have bad experiences in their online travels. Moreover, Web 2.0, or the participatory web, has raised new questions about the definition of "personal information."

ONLINE SHOPPING: INTERNET USERS LIKE THE CONVENIENCE BUT WORRY ABOUT THE SECURITY OF THEIR FINANCIAL INFORMATION

John B. Horrigan. The Pew Internet & American Life Project. Report. February 13, 2008. 32 pages.
http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Online%20Shopping.pdf

American Internet users have embraced online shopping because they say it is convenient and a time-saver. At the same time, most online Americans have high levels of concern about sending personal or credit card information over the Internet. Moreover, more than half of Internet users encounter frustrations and other frictions in the course of online shopping.

TROJAN DRAGON: CHINA'S CYBER THREAT

John J. Tkacik, Jr. The Heritage Foundation. Backgrounder #2106. February 8, 2008. 14 pages.
http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/upload/bg_2106.pdf

America's vulnerability to cyberattacks is a critical threat to national security. Chinese espionage activities in the United States comprise the single greatest risk to the security of American technologies, according to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Cyberpenetration is by far China's most effective espionage tool, and it is one that China's spy agencies use against America's allies almost as much as against U.S. targets. The U.S. military has been the primary target of Chinese cyberattacks, followed closely by the Departments of State, Commerce, and Homeland Security. Academic, industrial, defense, and financial databases are also vulnerable.

A PORTRAIT OF EARLY ADOPTERS: WHY PEOPLE FIRST WENT ONLINE -- AND WHY THEY STAYED

Amy Tracy Wells. The Pew Internet & American Life Project. Memo. February 6, 2008. 5 pages.
http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Early_Adopters.pdf

Canvassing of longtime Internet users shows that the things that first brought them online are still going strong on the Internet today. Then, it was bulletin boards; now, it's social networking sites. Then, it was the adventure of exploring the new cyberworld; now, it's upgrading to broadband and wireless connections to explore even more aggressively. Yet there are changes in their activities and motives. In the early days, most Internet users consumed material from websites. These days they are just as likely to produce material. One common refrain is that they think more change lies ahead and they are eager to watch and participate.

WIRELESS PITTSBURGH: SUSTAINABILITY OF POSSIBLE MODELS FOR A WIRELESS METROPOLITAN-AREA NETWORK

Jon M. Peha. Wireless Future Program. New America Foundation. Working Paper #21. February 2008. 23 pages.
http://www.newamerica.net/files/WirelessPittsburgh_Peha.pdf

Many cities are considering the deployment of a wireless metropolitan-area network (WiMAN) based on Wi-Fi technology. Some hope to find the “right” WiMAN policy, but in reality, different policies are appropriate for different cities. City leaders must often balance competing goals, including the desire to maximize the area in which wireless services will be available, to maximize competition among providers, to minimize subsidies from government agencies and non-profit organizations, and to ensure financial sustainability. This paper investigates the extent to which these goals can be met with four basic models: a single citywide monopoly WiMAN provider; facilities-based competition from multiple citywide WiMAN providers; a citywide WiMAN offering wholesale services to competing retail service providers; and open competition where multiple providers are free to serve only the more profitable neighborhoods. This paper estimates costs for constructing and operating a WiMAN in Pittsburgh using a sample architecture.

CONGRESS, CONTENT REGULATION, AND CHILD PROTECTION: THE EXPANDING LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Adam Thierer. The Progress & Freedom Foundation. Progress Snapshot. Release 4.4. February 2008. 6 pages.

<http://pff.org/issues-pubs/ps/2008/ps4.4childprotection.pdf>

Though not yet complete, the 110th session of Congress has already witnessed an explosion of legislative proposals dealing with online child safety, or which seek to regulate media content or Internet communications in some fashion. Although an exact count of related legislative activity in previous sessions of Congress is not available, the author argues that there is little doubt that lawmakers have been more active on this front during this session of Congress than ever before. This index presents more than 30 of these legislative proposals.

INTERNET’S BROADER ROLE IN CAMPAIGN 2008

Andrew Kohut, Scott Keeter, Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock. The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press in association with The Pew Internet and American Life Project. Survey. January 11, 2008. 32 pages.

http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/Pew_MediaSources_jan08.pdf

The Internet is living up to its potential as a major source for news about the presidential campaign. Nearly a quarter of Americans (24%) say they regularly learn something about the campaign from the Internet, almost the double the percentage from a comparable point in the 2004 campaign (13%). Moreover, the Internet has now become a leading source of campaign news for young people and the role of social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook is a notable part of the story. Fully 42% of those ages 18 to 29 say they regularly learn about the campaign from the Internet, the highest percentage for any news source. In January 2004, just 20% of young people said they routinely got campaign news from the Internet.

VIDEO SHARING WEBSITES

Lee Rainie. The Pew Internet & American Life Project. Data Memo. January 9, 2008. 6 pages.

http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/Pew_Videosharing_memo_Jan08.pdf

The audience for YouTube and other Internet video sites has risen sharply the past year. 48% of Internet users (nearly half of online adults) said they had ever visited a video-sharing site such as YouTube. A year ago, in December 2006, 33% of Internet users said they had ever visited such sites. That represents growth of more than 45% year-to-year. According to the polling data, 15% of respondents said they had

used a video-sharing site "yesterday" -- the day before they were contacted for this survey. A year ago, 8% had visited such a site "yesterday." Thus, on an average day, the number of users of video sites nearly doubled from the end of 2006 to the end of 2007.

WIRELESS CARTERPHONE: A LONG OVERDUE POLICY PROMOTING CONSUMER CHOICE AND COMPETITION

Rob Frieden. Wireless Future Program. New America Foundation. Working Paper #20. January 2008. 22 pages.

http://www.newamerica.net/files/Wireless_Carterfone_Frieden.pdf

Wireless carriers in the United States operate as regulated common carriers when providing basic telecommunications services, such as voice telephone service, text messaging and speed dialing to services and content. Thirty-nine years ago the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in its Carterfone policy established such a right for wireline subscribers. This paper explains why wireless Carterfone policy constitutes a long overdue policy response to carrier practices that often have nothing to do with protecting their networks from technical harm or other legitimate network management needs. For example, blocking the implementation of wireless Carterfone enables carriers to continue locking subscribers into two-year service contracts with substantial penalties for early termination. In exchange for the service commitment, consumers acquire a carrier-subsidized handset, but they also consent to carrier-imposed restrictions on the use of the handset they bought, including the ability to access telecommunications and content services of competitors even after the carrier has recouped its subsidy.

THE MYSPACE-AG AGREEMENT: A MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SOCIAL NETWORKING?

Adam Thierer. The Progress & Freedom Foundation. Progress on Point. Release 15.1. January 2008. 7 pages.

<http://pff.org/issues-pubs/pops/pop15.1myspaceAGagreement.pdf>

On January 14th, social networking website operator MySpace.com announced a joint effort with 49 state Attorneys General aimed at better protecting children online. At a press conference in New York City, MySpace and the Attorneys Generals unveiled a "Joint Statement on Key Principles of Social Networking Safety" involving expanded online safety tools, improved education efforts, and law enforcement cooperation. They also agreed to create an industry-wide Internet Safety Technical Task Force to study online safety tools, including a review of online identity authentication technology. The agreement is a major step forward for online safety. Indeed, many of the principles in the agreement could form a potential model "code of conduct" that other social networking sites could adopt.