

Project 2 Questions

1. One option that could enforce that only real licenses are being used is buy airbnb forcing each tenant to get their license verified by the state and sent in by the state. For example, you can get a license verified for \$15 in the state of michigan and have them email the verification to whoever needs it. This could be done so that airbnb would only allow people who have had the state send them a license verification certificate be able to rent out their properties. One issue that might arise is people impersonating the state email and creating and sending fake documents to airbnb that the people working would skim through and not fully check. A second argument could be that this would also force airbnb workers to use more time as the airbnb email would be receiving heavier traffic and would have to be scraped constantly to find new verifications which could make the verification process take even longer.
2. One research question that we could explore using our data is if electricity is used in the unit. This is because in order for the person renting out their unit to get their license and make sure that the house is secure and up to standards, they would either have to say that the house does not have electricity or say that it does. We could answer this question by scraping more of airbnb's site by searching through amenities offered by the unit and if electricity is on there then we could know that. This could alleviate housing insecurities as people would know the information ahead of time
3. I think that the trespass to chattel is important to consider when discussing the legality of web scraping because that is when someone is intentionally interfering with someone else's personal information/property from the internet. This reminds me of what I consider hacking to be as in the definition of trespass to chattels they also include destroying or barring the owner's access to chattel as well. To me this needs to be looked at because when the word hacker comes up, it always refers to someone who has stolen, deleted or locked someone out of their online accounts. This is directly what is going on with web scraping so trespass to chattels to me needs to be heavily looked at when discussing the legality of web scraping.
4. I think that one thing we need to think about is what type of data we are looking at and how it might affect someone if it is scraped from the internet and shown to others. For example, if we were to web scrape salaries and the net compensation of each employee at an organization and then made the information public, this could harm the company as employees might become upset with pay disparity and new hires would be able to negotiate better. Another guideline should be, "will this information make the people who could use it live better or worse?" When referring back to airbnb, web scraping to find reviews and amenities could

be very helpful and aid users in trying to find the best housing for them. However, just scraping information just to scrape it is bad as I feel that we should only employ web scraping when no parties are harmed in the end.