Path: senator-bedfellow.mit.edu!bloom-beacon.mit.edu!pad-thai.aktis.com!pad-thai.aktis.com!not-for-mail

From: ld231782@longs.lance.colostate.edu (L. Detweiler)

Newsgroups: alt.privacy,alt.privacy.anon-server,alt.answers,news.answers

Subject: Anonymity on the Internet FAQ (3 of 4)

Supersedes: <net-anonymity/part3\_746424008@GZA.COM>

Followup-To: poster

Date: 20 Sep 1993 09:39:18 -0400

Organization: TMP Enterprises

Lines: 1442

Sender: faqserv@security.ov.com

Approved: news-answers-request@MIT.Edu

Expires: 25 Oct 1993 13:38:21 GMT

Message-ID: <net-anonymity/part3\_748532301@GZA.COM>

References: <net-anonymity/part1\_748532301@GZA.COM>

Reply-To: ld231782@longs.lance.colostate.edu

NNTP-Posting-Host: pad-thai.aktis.com

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ANONYMITY on the INTERNET

=========================

Compiled by L. Detweiler <ld231782@longs.lance.colostate.edu>.

<4.1> What are the responsibilities of anonymous server operators?

<4.2> What kind of rules should the server operator maintain?

<4.3> Should the anonymous server operator maintain high `visibility'?

<4.4> Should the anonymous server operator ever reveal identities?

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<5.1> How does anonymity relate to group moderation?

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\_\_\_\_\_

<4.1> What are the responsibilities of anonymous server operators?

Jurgen Botz <jbotz@mtholyoke.edu>:

> I think that what ... these points show clearly is that an

> anonymous posting service has a great deal of responsibility,

> both towards its clients and towards the Net as a whole. Such a

> service should (IMHO) have a set of well-defined rules and a

> contract that its clients should sign, under the terms of which

> they are assured anonymity.

Johan Helsingius <julf@penet.fi>:

> I have tried to stay out of this discussion, and see where the

> discussion leads. But now I rally feel like I have to speak up.

> ... I have repeatedly made clear ... that I \*do\* block users if

> they continue their abuse after having been warned. In many cases

> the users have taken heed of the warning and stopped, and in some

> cases even apologized in public. And when the warning has not had

> the desired effect, I have blocked a number of users.

Karl Krueger <kkrueg@ukelele.GCR.COM>:

> Is M. Julf acting in an irresponsible manner by not taking action

> against objectionable uses of his server? Of course not! His

> server serves as a common carrier, a service that impassively and

> disinterestedly passes information, like a smoothly-running

> machine. M. Julf is, in fact, avoiding the political flamefront

> by not intruding into his users' business! If he did, he would

> be a censor!

David A. Clunie <dclunie@pax.tpa.com.au>:

> Presumably this was why the anonymous server I ran that allowed

> encryption to and from posting and receiving sites with total

> anonymity was so popular - it meant that even an unscrupulous

> postmaster who read other people's mail could not see posts and

> replies even in the mail queue and spool areas ... they were

> encrypted right up to the user's workstation. If the decryption

> was run offline (ie. not on the mail server but on the user's

> desktop) then even keystroke capturing would not allow the evil

> administrator to intercept the message !

Afzal Ballim <afzal@divsun.unige.ch>:

> Julf, when I came into this fray you were being painted as someone

> who wanted to give totally unrestrictive anonymous posting

> abilities to people, without there being any notion of

> responsibilty attached to it. More recently, some people have

> said that this is not the case, and that you will deal with

> irresponsible posting in the same way as any other sysadmin would

> do. I haven't seen a posting from you in a long time on this

> matter. Can you please clear up what is your policy?

Richard M. Hartman <hartman@ulogic.UUCP>:

> There have also been a lot of postings claiming that, despite

> complaints, Johan has taken no action against posters (in

> contradiction with the implied promise in the signature appended

> to each message).

Robert MacDowell <bobmacd@netcom.com>:

> Another operator of an ACS equipped his with a "fire

> extinguisher" which he did use once or twice to eliminate public

> posting from certain assholes. While I firmly believe that Julf

> should stand by his guns and continue to support anonymous

> posting to anywhere, it is \*also\* appropriate for him to block

> posting from anyone who's proven himself to be dangerous.

Jay Maynard <jmaynard@nyx.cs.du.edu>:

> The site admin is postmaster@anon.penet.fi ... who appears to be

> almost completely unwilling to rein in his users, and refuses to

> participate in discussions about his service. By the time he

> imposes his minimum sanction on a particular user, the damage has

> been done, and there is no reason someone shouldn't use the

> anonymous service to break the law: he can do so, secure in the

> knowledge that he will never be held accountable for the crime.

Dr. Cat <From: cat@wixer.cactus.org>:

> I don't know if Julf's level of "reasonableness" is really a

> relevant issue. After all, isn't it just as possible a system

> administrator at a "normal" site that doesn't host any anon

> server could be totally unreasonable about helping out with valid

> requests you might make of him/her? The issue of whether people

> are "reasonably helpful" in resolving problems or not, and what

> should be done about them if they aren't, is a seperate issue

> from whether anon servers should exist or not.

Ze Julf <julf@penet.fi>:

> I have noticed with an increasing concern the fact that people use

> the anonymous service at anon.penet.fi to post copyrighted

> pictures in a.b.p.e. This exposes both the server and the net as

> a whole to lawsuits, and is definitely inappropriate use of the

> service. I hereby warn that anybody posting copyrighted material

> will be blocked from the server.

>

> There has also been some concern about the volume of binary

> postings using the server. I really hope that users will have the

> common sense not to flood the group (and the server) with too

> much material at one go, but I might have to implement some kind

> of limiting mechanism into the server if things don't improve.

Ze Julf <julf@penet.fi>:

> The anonymous service at anon.penet.fi has been closed down.

>

> ... I really want to apologize both to all the users on the

> network who have suffered from the abusive misuse of the server,

> and to all the users who have come to rely on the service. Again,

> I take full responsibility for what has happened.

Ze Julf <julf@penet.fi>:

> I would like to take advantage of the current break in the service

> to implement the improvements and changes I had planned for

> anon.penet.fi Mark II. Among changes I already have in the

> pipeline is support for PGP and PEM encrypted messages, digital

> signatures, and "public" and "private" anon ID's, as well as a

> cleaner user interface.

>

> Meanwhile, I would like ask \*you\* for help. I have set up the

> address "ideas@penet.fi" to receive input, suggestions for

> improvements, comments etc., so please let me know what kind of

> features you would like to see (both technical and

> policy-related) in the new server by sending your input to that

> address.

>

> I would also suggest that those groups that had started or had

> been thinking about doing a vote on the desirability of anonymity

> for that group continue with their plans and let me know the

> results.

\_\_\_\_\_

<4.2> What kind of rules should the server operator maintain?

Karl Kleinpaste <anonymus+0@charcoal.com>:

> The following "commandments" were suggested during a discussion on

> anonymous servers in news.admin.policy; credit, thanx, and

> appreciation to Laura Lemay <lemay@netcom.com>

>

> 2. Thou shalt not bait.

> 5. Thou shalt not cause undue distress to the members of any

> newsgroup.

> 7. Thou shalt not cause the anonymous server to come under fire.

>

> All of this seemingly-excessive formalism comes down to one really

> very simple premise that your mother tried to teach you before

> you got to kindergarten:

>

> Play nice.

>

> That's all. Play nice, act responsibly, don't flame needlessly

> (or, at least, very often), think about what you're doing, and

> don't lose touch with the fact that the Usenet is not Real

> Life(tm).

David Hayes <dave@jato.jpl.nasa.gov>:

> What this says is that \_you\_ set the standards for

> interpretation.

Karl Kleinpaste <Karl\_Kleinpaste@cs.cmu.edu>:

> It's my server, running on my system, with my butt hanging out in

> the breeze if anything goes wrong. Of \_course\_ I set the

> standards for interpretation, you twit.

>

> ... it's a seat-of-the-pants analysis at every step, life's like

> that. If you can't figure out a way to put the phrase "play

> nice" into a workable context, you have demonstrated that you

> have a serious need to re-take Remedial Social Graces 101.

>

> What it comes down to is, If you can't raise the topic in a

> careful, thoughtful, and tactful way so as not to abusively peg

> the flamage meter on first assault, then I don't think you have

> much business using my server. And that's my call.

>

> I've done nothing more than lay down the ground rules, very fuzzy

> and open-to-interpretation and why-dont-we-

> work-this-out-together ground rules, on what should not go

> through my server. Nothing more. The world will not end if you

> screw up, induce a flame war, and I block you from the server for

> a week or so as a result.

Evan Leibovitch <evan@telly.on.ca>

> It would be hypocritical of me to say that a well-working aliasing

> system (not a true anonymous service) couldn't fulfill the

> requirements for anonymity in terms of people wanting to stay in

> the "closet" (and I don't just mean in matters of homosexuality).

> Having set one up in for rec.arts.erotica, I know what's

> involved, and I've seen the need.

>

> I have no problem (never did) with the aliasing service used for

> alt.sex.bondage that predates Julf's service by quite a while.

> It's specific to the group and allows (even encourages) verbal

> aliases. It's admin was trusted as someone who could balance

> privacy and responsibility.

>

> It was the no-holds-barred service I objected to, with no

> publlcly-posted FAQ that I ever saw, probably because you

> couldn't possibly post it in every group hit by penet's anon

> posters.

>

> Given the choice of a badly-run aliasing system or none at all, I

> would choose none.

Karl Kleinpaste <Karl\_Kleinpaste@cs.cmu.edu>:

> The goal in making these rules/guidelines/recommendations is not,

> by any means, to be insulting, or to play the part of a control

> freak, or to be generally irritating. The goal is survival only,

> survival of the server so that it may continue to provide its

> intended services to the vast majority of honorable, decent,

> adult users.

>

> There is by now quite a backlog of experience to show that

> anonymous servers are difficult, dangerous beasts.

>

> Anonymous servers have a tendency to die. We should prevent this.

Ed Hall <edhall@rand.org>:

> So a reasonable set of rules, such as Karl has proposed for his

> service, make a lot of sense. True, there is judgement

> involved--as there is in any situation where people's needs are

> balanced against each other. Karl could make a royal mess of

> things by interpreting the merely disagreeable as actual

> harassment. But just as long as the "penalty" is restriction and

> not revelation, the anonymous poster can simply seek other means

> with little harm done.

Francisco X DeJesus <dejesus@avalon.nwc.navy.mil>:

> I think that a server in which anonymity is guaranteed, PROVIDED

> you abide by certain rules would be far from useless. Just state

> what the rules are, plainly and clearly, and state what the

> consequences of breaking them would be. Such a service is what

> most people here would have liked, and I doubt it would get a

> 'bad name' if the rules and limitations were reasonable.

>

> Now back to the regularly scheduled flame war...

Doug Linder <PSION@HOLONET.NET>:

> If the policies were fair and clearly defined, I don't think

> anyone would have a problem with them - at least not the average

> users. And the threat of exposure would keep the bratty

> anarchist college kids from getting way out of line.

Julf <an0@anon.penet.fi>:

> I am a firm believer in everybody's right to express themselves

> freely (why else would I put in lots of money and effort into

> running this blasted server?), but posting purely abusive

> messages intended to irritate people on purpose is not what the

> service is intended for. Childish tricks like that was exactly

> the reason the server got closed down, and will only lead to more

> and more newsgroups banning anonymous postings alltogether.

>

> I therefore ask you to refrain from this kind of postings. If you

> do continue with the abusive messages, I am forced to block your

> access to the server. Please feel free to contact me if you want

> to discuss the matter.

\_\_\_\_\_

<4.3> Should the anonymous server operator maintain high `visibility'?

Richard M. Hartman <hartman@ulogic.UUCP>:

> I guess one of the things I like LEAST about this guy is his

> refusal to take part in the discussion that his service has

> spawned. I have seen a total of two postings from him (if I

> missed any, I apologize).

>

> Even more, the fact that he did not discuss the new service and

> it's potential impact BEFORE he implemented it.

Johan Helsingius <julf@penet.fi>:

> I have answered a lot of personal mail related to server abuse,

> and as a result of that, blocked a number of abusive users. I

> have also withdrawn the service from several newsgroups where the

> users have taken a vote on the issue. I have not made any

> comments on news.admin.policy, partly because the

> newly-implemented password feature (as a emergency measure

> against a security hole) has kept me really busy answering user

> queries the last two weeks, and partly because I feel it is not

> for me to justify the service, but for the users. The problem

> with news.admin.policy is that the readership is rather elective,

> representing people whith a strong interest in centralised

> control.

Richard M. Hartman <hartman@ulogic.UUCP>:

> This seems to be a rather bigoted attitude. I would consider that

> this group is for anyone who wishes to discuss how the net should

> be controlled. Saying that we only have an interest in

> "centralized control" is a clear indication of bias. You are

> perfectly welcome to join in the discussions here to promote your

> views on control.

Barry Salkin <bsalkin@nyx.cs.du.edu>:

> I'm also grateful to Julf. His server was a boon to many people

> who did NEED anonymity, as well as people to whom it was merely

> convenient, as evidenced by its messages of support. ... I would

> also like to express my admiration for the way he conducted

> himself - rarely replying to public flames publicly, and always

> being reasonable. ... He may have made mistakes, (this is still

> debateable), but I feel the net.at.large could learn a great deal

> from his noble attitude.

Paul S. Sears <sears@tree.egr.uh.edu>:

> I would like to be the first to publicly thank Julf for making a

> public statement about his intentions. The shows that he does

> care and is responsible (accusations that I stated he did not

> demonstrate which I posted earlier). It is not necessarily

> what his actions are, but the fact that he acknowledges that

> there \_might\_ be a problem and is doing what he deems as

> necessary and in the best interests of everyone involved.

>

> By this action alone, Julf has quelled all of my previous concerns

> about anonymous posting sites...

Tarl Neustaedter <tarl@coyoacan.sw.stratus.com>:

> The server has come back in a FAR more restricted form, and Johan

> seems to be far more pro-active about controlling abuse. Some of

> it may be merely appearance, he seems to have taken to heart

> comments about being \_visibly\_ in control.

Richard E. Depew <red@uhura.neoucom.edu>:

> Julf -- I also want to express my deep gratitude to \*you\*. You

> have, by posting this warning, demonstrated that you are serious

> about your promise to curb abusive users. I have full confidence

> in your integrity and commitment to running anon.penet.fi in a

> responsible manner.

>

> Don't worry, Julf, you are still on my Christmas card list ...

> :-)

Karl Kleinpaste <Karl\_Kleinpaste@cs.cmu.edu>:

> I soured on Julf himself because of his apparent refusal even to

> discuss the matter in public, and because the very few times that

> he had anything to say at all, it was always pretty much to say

> (as I read it), "it runs like this, and it \_will\_not\_ change."

Ze Julf <julf@penet.fi>:

> In retrospect I realize that I have been guilty to keeping a far

> too low profile on the network, prefering to deal with the abuse

> cases privately instead of making strong public statements.

> Unfortunately I realized this only a couple of days before being

> forced to shut down the service, but the results of a single

> posting to alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.d gave very positive

> results. I take full blaim for my failure to realize the

> psychological effects of a strongly stated, publicly visible

> display of policy with regards to the abuse cases. For this I

> have to apologize to the whole net community.

\_\_\_\_\_

<4.4> Should the anonymous server operator ever reveal identities?

Carl Kleinpaste (Karl\_Kleinpaste@godiva.nectar.cs.cmu.edu):

> ...were I to be in the position of offering such a service again,

> my promises of protection of anonymity would be limited. Not on

> the basis of personal opinion of what gets posted, but on the

> basis of postings which disrupt the smooth operation of the

> Usenet. The most obvious and direct recourse would be to `out'

> the abusive individual. Less drastic possibilities exist -- the

> software supports a "fire extinguisher" by which individuals can

> be prevented from posting.

>

> I know full well that my attitude is such that certain folk will

> consider themselves to be prevented from using it. That's fine.

> That's their choice. No loss to either of us. They'll find

> another anon server, or do without.

Ze Julf <julf@penet.fi>:

> A lot of people have contacted me to ask for help in setting up a

> similar service, or to inform me of their plans to set up a

> service. I really applaud and support these efforts, but I also

> encourage the anon service operators to make their policies very

> clear to their users. One example is that some potential anon

> service operators feel the best way to deal with abusers is to

> expose them on the net. Personally I feel that the idea of public

> stocks belong to the middle ages, and that it provides a very

> dangerous way to expose somebody by sending faked abusive

> messages (and yes, it is trivially easy to fake the identity of

> the sender of both e-mail and netnews articles even without an

> anon server). There are also different policies regarding logging

> messages, the physical security of the server etc.

Sean Barrett <sean@gomez.Jpl.Nasa.Gov>

> Way to go, Julf! Here is one user you can count on for complete

> support!

Brad Templeton <brad@clarinet.com>:

> With that in mind, the operator has to realize that there can be

> guidelines about abuse of the anon server. That's already true,

> since I can't imagine somebody letting others use their anon

> server for really illegal traffic, unless they agree with the

> traffic and want to support it.

>

> One can easily enforce such policies by denying access, or far

> worse, revealing the identities of abusers.

Dave Kirsch <zoid@deep.rsoft.bc.ca>:

> I think one of the successes of the anon.penet.fi server was

> because Julf didn't reveal any users' identity. If he did, he

> would have been flamed to death and his service given a 'bad

> name.'

>

> For an anonymous posting service to be respected and in any way

> successful, anonymity MUST be guaranteed. If it wasn't, then

> the service is basically useless.

<styri@balder.nta.no>:

> My respect towards Julf is increasing, btw. He's bound to have got

> his share of shouting, name calling, finger pointing and flak

> these last months that keeping his mouth shut about the identity

> of some of the abusers must have been hard at times.

Brad Templeton <brad@clarinet.com>:

> Rather, it seems to be the case that due to fairly large net

> opposition, only anonymity services that have some sort of

> restrictions will get to exist.

>

> Other solutions proposed, such as services that lay down rules and

> threaten to reveal names if the rules are broken may well be

> satisfactory.

"somebody":

> There is an interesting problem with control and moderation. The

> only way to ensure it is to threaten to expose the identity of

> violators. However, who determines where the line is crossed, and

> if violating the privacy for all posts by that person is

> justified by the content of a few? It would make an interesting

> ethics debate at some point....

\_\_\_\_\_

<4.5> What should system operators do with anonymous postings?

Ed McGuire <emcguire@intellection.com>:

> I would like to know how to junk all articles posted by the

> anonymous service currently being discussed. Ideally I would

> actually tell my feed site not to feed me articles posted by the

> anonymous service. Assuming the C News Performance Release, what

> is a simple way to accomplish this? Or where should I look to

> learn how to do it myself?

David Clunie <dclunie@pax.tpa.com.au>:

> That's a bit draconian isn't it ? Have your users unanimously

> decided that they would like you to do this or have you decided

> for them ?

Ed McGuire <emcguire@intellection.com>:

> Good question. Nobody has decided. I have no definite plan to do

> this, just wanted the technical data.

John Hascall <john@iastate.edu>:

> Since when is Usenet a democracy? If someone wants to run an

> anonymous service, that's their business. If you want to put

> that host in your killfile, that's your business. If a newsadmin

> wants to blanket-drop all postings from that site, that's between

> them and the other people at that site. If everyone ignores a

> service, the service effectively doesn't exist.

Karl Kleinpaste <Karl\_Kleinpaste@cs.cmu.edu>:

> It's bloody fascinating that (all?) the proponents of unimpeded

> universal anon posting access can't seem to find any middle

> ground at all. Why is there such a perception of absolutism?

> Where does this instant gratification syndrome come from, "I want

> anon access and I want it NOW"? Who are the control freaks here?

David Toland <det@sw.stratus.com>:

> Why is this such a holy cause? Why the overwhelming urge to

> police the net (a vain pursuit IMO)? Why silence a voice just

> because the speaker is afraid to show himself, whether or not you

> agree with his or her reasons for hiding?

Richard E. Depew <red@redpoll.neoucom.edu>:

> please listen to the consensus of the news administrators in this

> group: any newsgroup should be consulted \*before\* letting your

> server post messages to that group.

Alexander EICHENER <C96@vm.urz.uni-heidelberg.de>:

> There is no pompous "consensus of \*the\* news administrators"

> here - maybe you would like to invent one. There is a sizeable

> number of people who are concerned about the possible (and, to a

> minor extent, about the actual abuse of the server as it is

> configured now). These concerns are respectable; Johan is dealing

> with them. ... There are some (few) who rage with foam before

> their mouth and condemn the service altogether. And a number who

> defend it, pointing out, like Kate Gregory, that even a group

> like misc.kids. can benefit from pseudonymous postings.

K. Kleinpaste <Karl\_Kleinpaste@cs.cmu.edu>:

> I think I'm feeling especially rude and impolite. If it's good

> for Johan, it's good for me. After all, he didn't ask the

> greater Usenet whether universal anon access was a good idea; he

> just did it. ... Yes, I'm a seriously rude pain in the ass now,

> and I think I'll arm the Usenet Death Penalty, slightly modified,

> not for strategic whole-site attack, but tactical assault, just

> "an[0-9]\*@anon.penet.fi" destruction. Only outside alt.\*, too,

> let's say.

>

> To parrot this line...people have been doing things like the UDP

> (that is, cancelling others' postings) for years, no one could

> ever stop them, and it's only politeness and good sense that has

> prevented them up to now.

>

> There are 2 newsadmins ready to arm the UDP. They've asked for my

> code. I haven't sent it yet. Only one site would be necessary to

> bring anon.penet.fi to a screeching halt. Anyone can implement

> the UDP on their own, if they care to. Politeness and good sense

> prevents them from doing so. I wonder how long before one form of

> impoliteness brings on another form.

Ze Julf <julf@penet.fi>:

> It would be trivially easy to bring anon.penet.fi to a screeching

> halt. In fact it has happened a couple of times already. But as

> we are talking threats here, let me make one as well. A very

> simple one. If somebody uses something like the UDP or

> maliciously brings down anon.penet.fi by some other means, it

> will stay down. But I will let the users know why. And name the

> person who did it. OK? As somebody said on this thread: "You have

> to take personal responsibility for your actions", right?

Perry E. Metzger <pmetzger@snark.shearson.com>:

> The desire of the news administrators of the world to save me from

> possible grief is touching -- but misguided. I need and want no

> censorship of my newsfeed.

Ze Julf <julf@penet.fi>:

> I am deeply concerned by the fact that the strongest opposition to

> the service didn't come from users but from network

> administrators. I don't think sysadmins have a god-given mandate

> to dictate what's good for the users and what's not. A lot of

> users have contacted me to thank me for the service, describing

> situations where anonymity has been crucial, but I could never

> have imagined in my wildest dreams. At the same time quite a few

> network administrators have made comments like "I can't imagine

> any valid use for anonymity on the net" and "The only use for

> anonymity is to harrass and terrorize the net".

Christopher Pilewski <cap@mb5000.anes.upmc.edu>:

> The whole idea of closing down anon.penet.fi because a few people

> were irresponsible is absurd. It is akin to ... closing down the

> highway system because a few people speed.

>

> I should also mention that the internet has a small number of

> wide-eyed, tiny-brained control-freaks running lose on it. (You

> guys know who you are.) Arguments about freedom won't have any

> meaning to them. They neither approve of nor understand freedom.

> My argument is not even aimed at them. It is aimed at reasonable

> people who happen to take the view opposed to mine.

Karl Krueger <kkrueg@ukelele.GCR.COM>:

> For the sake of the NET's posterity and that of future users,

> allow freedom to reign. If Julf's service is a Bad Thing for the

> NET, it will eventually die out of its own lack of productivity.

> There is no need to try to lobotomize it.

Richard M. Hartman <hartman@ulogic.UUCP>:

> What admins have a responsibility to is the smooth operation of

> the network. Actually an anon service COULD be good for the

> users -- I was just trying to "dictate" what I thought was good

> for the anon service (in my own way) <g>.

Richard E. Depew <red@redpoll.neoucom.edu>:

> I went into the lab to look for an anti-pathogen that would

> inhibit the growth of the pathogen. I found one -- the Usenet

> Death Penalty. This was clearly dangerous stuff, so I tried to

> attenuate it -- to improve its therapeutic index.

>

> The UDP was designed to totally eradicate postings from a given

> site from all of USENET. I didn't want to do that -- I only

> wanted to protect the part I valued most highly -- the brain. So

> I attenuated the UDP so it would only affect the "sci" hierarchy.

Dan Veditz <daniel@borland.com>:

> I can certainly see a group not liking anonymous posts, but let

> the group decide to moderate them away, not you. It's not much

> different from unwanted proseletyzers on the religious groups.

Jonathan Eifrig <eifrig@beanworld.cs.jhu.edu>:

> Do we \_really\_ want to start assigning liability to providers for

> the posts that their users create? Sounds like a recipe for

> disaster to me. If this were the state of the law, how many

> undergraduates would have Usenet access then? I doubt many

> universities would take the risk.

Michael Friedman <mfriedma@us.oracle.com>:

> Finally, in a total breach of what he claimed in his post, Julf

> says that he will resume a general, unrestricted service as soon

> as he gets his own connections to the appropriate networks.

<grady@netcom.com>:

> So... are you saying that Julf hasn't passed the

> stupidity/conformity examination required for proper membership

> among the elite Backboner Cabal?

Richard E. Depew <red@uhura.neoucom.edu>:

> My "net-probation" offer clearly says that if I feel the need to

> change my mind on this, I won't do it suddenly. Instead, I'll

> announce my intent to news.admin.policy a week in advance, so I

> can take the comments and suggestions of other thoughtful news

> admins into account before making a final decision.

>

> I will \*shelve\* ARMM for the forseeable future. I will let you

> know if the irresistable urge to commit net-suicide should strike

> me in the future.

>

> How could you have a problem with this?

>

> Heck, if this works out well (as measured by personal survival

> criteria), I may make this a permanent commitment, but I want to

> see whether it works first, by conducting a more limited

> experiment.

>

> I promise to take into serious consideration any remarks that are

> framed in polite language.

\_\_\_\_\_

<5.1> How does anonymity relate to group moderation?

mjo@msen.com <Mike O'Connor>:

> About the only time I'd support restricting Usenet groups would be

> in the event that I was the moderator and wanted to be

> extra-careful that someone from an Anonymous server didn't manage

> to post to a moderated Usenet newsgroup.

John Stanley <stanley@skyking.OCE.ORST.EDU>:

> Why shouldn't anonymous postings be allowed to moderated groups?

> For those groups, there IS a moderator who HAS been elected to

> filter the material that gets distributed. Anonymous posters who

> post inappropriate material do nothing but get their postings

> rejected by the moderator.

>

> Those that post appropriate material should get their postings

> approved. Why shouldn't they be? By definition, the content is

> appropriate for the newsgroup.

>

> The current moderation system is more than capable of handling

> anonymous posting. No new system needs to be invented to deal

> with the few problem users who are anonymous.

Lasse Hiller|e Petersen <lhp@daimi.aau.dk>:

> If a newsgroup wants to be noise- and nuisance-free, then it

> should call for moderation. This should happen on a per-newsgroup

> basis, and not as a general USENET ban on anonymous postings. Of

> course one principle of moderation might be to keep out all

> anonymous postings, and could be achieved automatically. It would

> still be \_moderation\_. Personally I would prefer moderation

> criteria being based on actual content.

David A. Clunie (dclunie@pax.tpa.com.au)

> If a "group" doesn't want to receive certain posts it should

> become moderated - there are clearly defined mechanisms on

> non-alt groups for this to take place. An automated moderator

> excluding posts from certain (eg. anonymous) sites or individuals

> could easily be established. If anyone wants to take such a

> draconian approach then they are welcome to do so and good luck

> to them. I doubt if I will be reading their group !

David Weingart <phydeaux@cumc.cornell.edu>:

> the unmoderated groups can and should accept postings regardless

> of origin...that's the point of having no moderator. If the

> \_moderator\_ of a moderated group decides not to accept anon

> postings (and it's within the groups charter), then fine, and

> that should be in the FAQ (if it's not in the charter, the

> moderator should be replaced ASAP).

Richard Depew <red@redpoll.neoucom.edu>:

> You may not like my "Automated Retroactive Minimal Moderation"

> script, but you must at least admit that it is simply an

> automated version of moderation - a well-accepted practice in

> newsgroups that want to keep an acceptable signal/noise ratio.

> You may protest that I have bypassed the usual mechanisms for

> establishing moderation, and you would be right. I have brused

> some USENET traditions while trying to protect others.

David A. Clunie (dclunie@pax.tpa.com.au)

> No-one has appointed you as the moderator of all the non-alt

> groups retrospectively or otherwise, and no-one is likely to

> appoint anyone else in such a position either.

Richard Depew <red@redpoll.neoucom.edu>:

> You are right, no one has appointed me to the post of

> minimal-moderator. It is a volunteer position with, I assure

> you, miserable fringe benefits. I will gladly relinquish the

> position when the opportunity arises. :-)

John Stanley <stanley@skyking.OCE.ORST.EDU>:

> Neither you nor Dick Depew nor anyone who happens to volunteer

> were elected to moderate any postings to unmoderated groups.

> Moderating the postings to a group which has voted to be

> unmoderated is an action directly in opposition the the chosen

> method of operation for a group. Dick doesn't have the right to

> issue cancels for them, and you don't have the right to moderate

> them.

Richard Depew <red@redpoll.neoucom.edu>:

> It seems that \*they\* thought a moderator would junk \*all\*

> anonymous postings. So, I decided to beat a sword into a

> plowshare, and give them a taste of what they were wishing for.

>

> \*POOF\* -- Automated Retroactive Minimal Moderation

Dan Veditz <daniel@borland.com>:

> Geez, Dick, this is exactly what we tried to tell you before you

> activated ARMM--an unmoderated group has invited anyone,

> anywhere, to contribute, and when groups get too noisy \*for

> whatever reason\* members of the group can decide to moderate

> \*that group\*.

\_\_\_\_\_

<5.2> Should group votes be held on allowing anonymity?

Jon Noring <noring@netcom.com>:

> in general, I fear even letting newsgroup readers vote on either

> allowing or not allowing anonymous posting, since a priori they

> \*cannot\* know all the motives of \*legitimate\* posters, and I do

> not believe that any system should ever be instituted that would

> inhibit the posting of legitimate and informative posts.

Tim Pierce <twpierce@unix.amherst.edu>:

> Of course, how does one determine whether a "group" requests the

> service? A flat majority of posters voting in favor? A positive

> margin of 100 votes? Or what? No one speaks for a newsgroup.

Richard M. Hartman <hartman@ulogic.UUCP>:

> It is facist to suggest that a newsgroup is best able to decide

> whether it wants to allow anonymous postings instead of having

> them forced upon them by an service administrator?

Johan Helsingius <julf@penet.fi>:

> I have also blocked access to groups where the readership has

> taken a vote to ban anonymous postings, although I feel changing

> the newsgroup status to moderated is the only permanent solution

> for newsgroups that want to "formalize" discussion.

Richard E. Depew <red@redpoll.neoucom.edu>:

> Does this ... mean that you are volunteering to issue a Request

> For Discussion to ban anonymous postings or to moderate each of

> the 4000+ newsgroups that your server can reach? I don't think

> so, but this illustrates the trouble that your server is causing!

Richard M. Hartman <hartman@ulogic.UUCP>:

> I suggest that future RFD's consider the question of anonymous

> access as a separate issue from moderated/unmoderated. I feel

> that the two types of control are entirely different and not to

> be equated with one another.

>

> I also suggest that, in the interest of preserving the status quo,

> either:

>

> 1) ALL groups except those previously served by dedicated

> anonymous servers be considered "inaccessable by anonymous

> posting" unless and until that status is changed by

> a vote in news.groups.

>

> 2) (less draconian) All groups in sci, news & comp hierarchies

> be considered as above. talk & misc default to "accessible",

> and I'm open to suggestions about "rec".

Afzal Ballim <afzal@divsun.unige.ch>:

> What you are proposing is a change in behaviour of certain

> newsgroups (that they do not get anonymous posts) but without

> informing the people WHO READ THOSE GROUPS of this change. You're

> default is that groups should vote to change your change. I think

> that the default should be the opposite: that groups should vote

> to deny anonymous voting and that such votes should be respected

> by those who set up anonymous servers. I would also hope that

> providers of anonymous posting services would realise that they

> must shoulder a burden of responsibility for those who are using

> their service so that misuse can be minimised

John Stanley <stanley@skyking.OCE.ORST.EDU>:

> The precedent exists, and the votes have already been held. ...

> Every unmoderated group has already voted to allow anonymous

> posting.

\_\_\_\_\_

<5.3> Should anonymous posting to all groups be allowed?

Wes Morgan <morgan@engr.uky.edu>:

> I'm not suggesting that we should ban anonymous servers; as I've

> said, there are several situations in which anonymity is a Good

> Thing (tm).

>

> However, the notion that anonymity's shield should be

> automatically extended to every Usenet discussion is ridiculous;

> it opens the door to further abuse.

Tim Pierce <twpierce@unix.amherst.edu>:

> I'm not convinced by the arguments that an anonymous posting

> service for all newsgroups is inherently a bad idea, simply

> because it's a diversion from the status quo. Since the status

> quo previously permitted anonymous posting to \*no\* newsgroups,

> any anonymous posting service would reject the status quo.

>

> For any newsgroup you name, I bet I can envision a scenario

> involving a need for secrecy. If an accurate content-based

> filter of each anonymous posting could be devised to screen out

> those that don't require secrecy, wonderful. But it can't be

> done.

Brian W. Ogilvie <ogil@quads.uchicago.edu>:

> Limiting the service to alt groups, or specific groups, would not

> help those who want advice on sensitive issues in more

> 'professional' newsgroups.

Jon Noring <noring@netcom.com>:

> Though many have personal philosophical arguments against

> anonymous posters, their arguments have not been compelling

> enough to convince me that omni-newsgroup anonymous posting

> should be banned or severely restricted. Though I cannot prove

> it, it seems to me that those who do not like anonymous posting

> (in principle) do so for reasons that are personal (read,

> psychological discomfort) rather than for reasons related to

> maintaining the "integrity" of Usenet.

>

> Remember, it is impossible to be able to ascertain all the

> conceivable and legitimate motives for anonymous posting to

> newsgroups one normally would not deem to be "sensitive".

Dennis Wicks <guru@halcyon.com>:

> As has been pointed out before, there is a reason why someone

> would want to post anonymously to any given news group and it is

> close to tyranny for the "readers" of any given group to "decide"

> not to allow anonymous postings. I, and many others I am sure,

> read news groups that we hardly ever post to. But when I decide

> that I have something to post, and I feel that I have good and

> sufficient reasons to do so anonymously, nobody else has the

> right to decide whether or not those reasons are valid. The only

> person who can do so is me.

Richard M. Hartman <hartman@ulogic.UUCP>:

> All I REALLY would like to do is put "anonymous postings accepted:

> Y/N" on the RFDs AND change the default assumption for groups on

> the "serious" hierarchies (comp, sci, news) to NO.

>

> And finally, bear in mind that I am not against anonymous postings

> per se. I am against the assumption that ALL groups should be

> served by default. This could always be changed by a vote in

> news.groups for any individual group. I think that sci, comp &

> news should be defaulted to NO, rec I don't really care about,

> talk & misc should be defaulted to YES.

John Stanley <stanley@skyking.OCE.ORST.EDU>:

> The group votes have already been held. The "default assumption"

> for unmoderated groups is that anyone may post. Only by changing

> the English language so that "anyone" no longer includes "anyone"

> can you change the "default assumption" of who may post to a

> group.

Vincent Fox <vincent@cad.gatech.edu>:

> I wold certainly support anonymous service for

> alt.sexual.abuse.recovery, etc. SCI.MED is certainly not an

> appropriate place for UFO conspiracy theories. And the

> "whistle-blower" argument is pretty thin. If you want to to blow

> the whistle on some conspiracy or criminal actions, do it through

> the newspaper or the courts!

Karl Kleinpaste <Karl\_Kleinpaste@cs.cmu.edu>:

> I didn't "sour" on the idea of universal anon access; I was never

> sweet on it in the first place. I have never once, ever, in any

> posting, objected to anon access where the inhabitants of the

> group in question welcomed it. My objection is, and always has

> been, to infliction of universal anon access \_as\_a\_default\_.

> Nothing stronger.

Richard E. Depew <red@redpoll.neoucom.edu>:

> Anonymous servers are part of the normal flora of USENET. The

> normal flora are fine, and even beneficial, in their place. A

> \*global\* anonymous server is not part of the normal flora. It

> was a new phenomenon. I thought of the anonymous messages from

> anon.penet.fi to newsgroups that had not invited them to be like

> the spreading of an organism that is part of the normal flora of

> the skin into the blood stream which is normally sterile. Sepsis

> is a serious threat to the health of the infected individual even

> in the absence of serious symptoms. I felt USENET was at great

> risk.

Tarl Neustaedter <tarl@coyoacan.sw.stratus.com>:

> I will admit, I would sleep a lot better if Johan hadn't made

> allusions to re-starting it on a global basis when he gets a

> different feed. In its current form, his service is a net benefit

> to the net. It was only in the net-wide incarnation that it

> became a magnet for criticism, by inflicting the results on

> people who had no interest in anon server experiments.

\_\_\_\_\_

<5.4> Does anonymity have a place in `serious' or `scientific' areas?

Tom Mandel <mandel@netcom.com>:

> I cannot speak for others but I regard anonymous postings in a

> serious discussion as pretty much worthless. ...views that hide

> behind the veil of anon are hardly worth the trouble of reading.

Tarl Neustaedter <tarl@sw.stratus.com>:

> some of us find anonimity in technical

> matters to be profoundly offensive; anonimity in different forums

> has different meanings. If I get a phone call from someone who

> won't identify himself, I hang up. If I get U.S. mail with no

> return address, it goes into the garbage unopened. If someone

> accosts me in the street while wearing a mask, I back away -

> carefully, and expecting violence. In a technical discussion,

> anonimity means that the individual isn't willing to associate

> himself with the matter being discussed, which discredits his

> utterances and makes listening to them a waste of time.

Joe Buck <jbuck@forney.berkeley.edu>:

> You obviously have never submitted an article to a refereed

> journal, where you will receive anonymous reviews through a server

> (the editor) that behaves much like the one in Finland (e.g. you

> may reply and the editor will maintain the anonymity). ... Your

> comparison of someone who wants to express him/herself on a

> technical issue anonymously with a person who approaches you on a

> dark street with a ski mask is just emotionally overwrought

> nonsense; such posters pose no physical threat to you.

Dave Ratcliffe <dave@frackit.UUCP>:

> What possible need would someone have for posting anonymously to a

> sci.\* group?

>

> Anonymous posting have their place in CERTAIN groups. If I or

> anyone else needs to tell you what those groups are then you've

> been on another planet breathing exotic gases for too long.

<00acearl@leo.bsuvc.bsu.edu>:

> Remember, this is a newsgroup for posters writing about SCIENTIFIC

> issues. Anonymous discussion of scientific issues leads to bad

> science.

Wes Morgan <morgan@engr.uky.edu>:

> I wondered why people would want to post anonymously to technical

> groups.

Tal Kubo <kubo@zariski.harvard.edu>:

> One obvious reason is that personal disagreements could assume

> professional proportions. I've witnessed situations where

> something very similar has happened: two people who first

> interacted as antagonists in heated discussions over the net, met

> in person. The results were not pretty. Luckily that was merely

> a social situation; but imagine the same problem compounded by

> professional implications. For example, an academic might

> criticize another's work over the net, only to have his

> non-anonymous posting come back to haunt him in a tenure or grant

> decision or some such professional activity. I'm told that at

> business schools, students are advised to be polite to be each

> other, because the person they snub today might be their boss

> tomorrow.

Shannon Atkins <satkins@midway.ecn.uoknor.edu>:

> This sort of anonymity serves no purpose other than providing a

> way for "adults" to avoid responsibility. Anon posters who

> desire to flame or criticize other people don't have to weigh the

> possible consequences of their posts - the use of good judgment

> goes out the window. My policy goes something like this: if I

> don't feel strongly enough about the issue at hand to make a

> personal statement, I don't post, and if the consequences of a

> post seem to great or I simply don't have the balls to post it,

> I don't post. Naturally, this cuts down on my posting volume

> somewhat, and I try not to waste bandwidth firing off

> inappropriate and unfounded accusations and observations unlike

> the more abusive sect within the group of anon usersmore. I

> guess it just requires too much responsibility for some people to

> realize that you don't snub someone without a damn good reason -

> name-calling won't substitute for arguing a point successfully.

> People may not like you for pointing out their flaws in logic,

> but they will probably respect you.

Wes Morgan <morgan@engr.uky.edu>:

> While I fully support whistleblowers, I have to ask a simple

> question. I ask this from the perspective of the whistleblowers

> themselves, not as a third party looking in........

>

> IS USENET THE PROPER PLACE FOR SUCH ACTIVITIES?

>

> ... the notion of Usenet as a channel for professional

> whistleblowing or career disputes seems to be a disservice; I

> just don't see it as the proper forum, and it offers little more

> than the feeling of having something off your chest.

E. Johnson <johnson@access.digex.com>:

> Obviously, no one posts anonymously on groups like

> sci.physics.research or sci.nonlinearity. That is not because no

> controversial opinions are discussed (although most that are are

> beyond the reach of the rest of us :>), but because, in general,

> these people understand what they are saying AND ARE PREPARED

> DISCUSS AND/OR DEFEND IT.

Lyle J. Mackey <lestat@wixer.cactus.org>:

> I personally don't believe that pseudonymous postings are

> appropriate in a serious discussion area. If there is a

> LEGITIMATE reason for concealing the posters' identity, perhaps,

> but simply because they're not so sure if they want their name

> attached doesn't qualify as LEGITIMATE in my book. (Oh, and if

> you can come up with a legitimate purpose for anonymous postings,

> please, enlighten me.)

Stuart P. Derby <sderby@crick.ssctr.bcm.tmc.edu>:

> Three of our (the U.S.'s) founding fathers, Madison, Hamilton, and

> Jay, seemed to think "anonymous posting" was OK. The Federalist

> papers were originally printed in New York newspapers with

> authorship attributed to "Publius". I wonder if you would find

> their purpose "LEGITIMATE"?

\_\_\_\_\_

<5.5> What are some testimonials for anonymity?

Atul V Salgaonkar <avs20@ccc.amdahl.com>:

> I am very grateful and appreciative of this service , courtesey of

> penet.fi. Some important questions about my personal

> life/career/job were resolved due to kind help of other people

> who had been thru similar situations. In return, I have also

> replied to anon postings where I thought I could make a positive

> contribution.

>

> In general, anon service is a great, in my opinion, although like

> any tool some people will not use it responsibly. I suggest that

> it should be kept alive. Wasting bandwidth is less important than

> saving lives, I think.

Elisa J. Collins <us273532@mmm.serc.3m.com>:

> I have been informed that the anonymous posting service to many

> newsgroups has been turned off as a result of discussions in this

> newsgroup over people abusing it.

>

> I had been posting to a nontechnical misc newsgroup about an

> intimate topic for which I felt I required privacy. I have

> received immeasurable help from the people in that newsgroup, and

> I have never used anonymity to behave in an abusive, immature, or

> unethical fashion toward anyone.

>

> Please, folks, believe me, I \*need\* this service. Please

> consider my point of view and permit admin@anon.penet.fi to turn

> the service back on...

>

> Thank you.

Kate Gregory <xtkmg@trentu.ca>:

> In misc.kids there are three threads going on started by anonymous

> posters. One was about changing jobs so as to work less hours,

> job sharing and so on, from a woman who didn't want anyone at her

> current place of work to know she was thinking of looking for

> work elsewhere. The next was from a woman who is thinking of

> having a baby sometime soon and doesn't want coworkers, friends,

> family etc etc to know all about it, but who wants advice. The

> third is about sex after parenthood -- actually this was started

> by people posting in the usual way but then it was pointed out

> that the anonymous posting service might let more people

> participate.

>

> Misc.kids doesn't seem to be suffering any harm from the presence

> of anonymous posters; in fact it seems to have been helped by it.

Dan Hoey <hoey@zogwarg.etl.army.mil>:

> a recent use of the anonymous posting service on sci.math seemed

> seemed to be a student asking help on a homework problem. It has

> now been attributed to a teacher, asking for an explanation of a

> dubious answer in his teaching guide. He says his news posting

> is broken, so he is using the anonymous service as a mail-to-news

> gateway.

Rick Harrison <bbs-hrick@jwt.oau.org>:

> I read "sci.electronics" regularly and have found the occasional

> anonymous postings about pirate radio transmitters and

> electronic-genital stimulation to be much more interesting than

> the typical postings there. In other newsgroups like "sci.crypt"

> (cryptography) I imagine anonymous posts could be used by people

> who wanted to leak information to the public without getting

> fired or penalized for such acts.

David Weingart <phydeaux@cumc.cornell.edu>:

> Seriously, the amount of traffic from anon users on the sci groups

> is so low as to make it a non-problem; I've seen a ton (or tonne,

> if you're from a metric area) of roboposts and egregious

> statements from non-anon users on the sci hierarchy (flip through

> sci.skeptic and sci.physics sometime), and given that track

> record, it seems that it would make sense for the NON-anonymous

> users to be banned from the Net, since more of them do

> antisocial things like lying, flaming, and writing apps to cancel

> other people's messages.

Robert MacDowell <bobmacd@netcom.com>:

> So far there's been no indication of a specific \*problem\*, just a

> lot of hypothetical hyperventilating on the part of numerous

> paranoids here. Maybe I missed something, but I haven't seen any

> anon-posts that were actually a problem.

Solomon Yusim <syusim@bcm.tmc.edu>:

> I think it's most unfortunate what was done to Julf and his

> server. A few of my patients told me that they're using the

> server in order to connect with others and form support groups

> about issues about which they couldn't even think of speaking

> publicly. They may not be willing to say this here openly, but I

> feel that it behooves me to say this on their behalf.

Deeptendu Majumder <gt0963d@prism.gatech.EDU>:

> I never had much reason to read this newsgroup. anon service, for

> me, was a way to post to groups where I do not have posting

> privileges through normal channel (like this one). Groups like

> alt.suicide.holiday where I have met people whose experiences had

> helped me to deal with lot of my depressive feelings..No I am not

> suicidal..but depressive ,yeah at times..anonymity was not a need

> for me. But I do think it was very unfortunate the way the

> shutdown was conducted..A country where people are so dependent

> on shrinks...and green $$$$..all because nobody has the time to

> be a friend..

Steve Summit <scs@adam.mit.edu>:

> Little story: I am, or once thought I was, a well-regarded

> comp.lang.c "personality." (I still maintain its FAQ list.) But

> I was getting bored with posting (again, what I thought were)

> excessively high-quality articles to it, and I was getting too

> concerned with upholding whatever reputation I though I had,

> bending over way backwards to insert misunderstanding- and/or

> flame-preventing disclaimers, and stuff. Lately, however, I had

> been thinking it would be great fun to post similarly high-

> quality articles anonymously -- among other things, there's a

> certain (childish) thrill involved in being "somebody else" and

> being a little bit secret. In fact, just tonight I composed two

> such articles, which were the ones which bounced with the "server

> shut down" message.

Wes Morgan <morgan@engr.uky.edu>:

> Another oft-cited case is the mathematics professor who complained

> about his office, lack of net access, et cetera; this has been

> put forth as another valid example of 'necessary' Usenet

> anonymity.

>

> How about the mathematics professor who posted anonymous to verify

> a solution in the textbook he was using? As I understand it (I

> didn't see the original posting), he would have been embarassed

> to admit that he didn't understand the given solution.

Bill Bohrer <bohrer@maui.mcc.com>:

> Then again, what \*about\* some net.terrorist posting hurtful

> obscenities on a "support" group anonymously? Or the "Kill the

> Fags" posts that pop up all over the place? In my years of

> net.cruising though, the KTF crowd as I've dubbed them seem quite

> certain of their moral righteousness, or at least the backing of

> the ugly net.mob; they rarely seem to post anonymously

John A. Munson <jmunson@uwsuper.edu>:

> As things stand there seems to be a whole lot more angst over the

> activities of 57 anonymous "abusers" than there ought to be. As

> long as there are unmoderated groups, there will be abusive

> posts, regardless of whether or not there is anonymous posting

> available.

<an1017@anon.penet.fi>:

> I feel that the users that abuse the service are a minority. I

> believe there are better ways to deal with them than shutting

> down the entire operation and denying a large segment of the

> UseNet population use of the service.

>

> I am not is as skilled or knowledgeable as most of you when it

> comes to UseNet so maybe there are issues I am not taking into

> consideration. But from what I've seen of the banter on this

> group there has been no good reason to shut these services down

> and deny access to thousands of other users that don't have your

> powers.

Johan Helsingius <julf@penet.fi>:

> But of course this political situation is mainly caused by the

> abuse of the network that a very small minority of anon users

> engaged in. This small group of immature and thoughtless

> individuals (mainly users from US universities) caused much

> aggravation and negative feelings towards the service. This is

> especially unfortunate considering these people really are a

> minuscule minority of anon users. The latest statistics from the

> service show 18203 registered users, 3500 messages per day on the

> average, and postings to 576 newsgroups. Of these users, I have

> received complaints involving postings from 57 anonymous users,

> and, of these, been forced to block only 8 users who continued

> their abuse despite a warning from me.

Nancy Osberg <nosberg@scott.skidmore.edu>:

> Thank you for so clearly targeting US universities as the source

> of the problem for anon service shutting down. I have responded

> to a few people who posted here anonymously and I don't believe I

> have ever said or done anything illegal, harmful, degrading, or

> abusive. I think it would have been much nicer to leave that

> part of your posting out instead of including an ENTIRE group of

> people who are not ALL responsible for the problem.

Bert Medley <medley@sun44.synercom.hounix.org>:

> The problem, in many people's eyes, wasn't "abuse" but

> "accountability". They used "abuse", with several flagrant

> examples, as the reason. I saw no posted actual documented

> statistics of abusive posts versus rational or non-abusive posts.

> The small sample I had on this group leads me to believe that

> the number of abusive posts were inline with the ratio of

> non-anon posts.

\_\_\_\_\_

<5.6> What are some testimonials against anonymity?

Erik Oliver <eoliver@ralph.cs.haverford.edu>:

> And further that the penet server is not a good or useful service

> as it stands now, but just a veil to shield people from taking

> responsibility. For example, the poster who wanted to be able to

> ask for information about illegal cable decoders.... HMMMM...

> Yes, we should really protect this sort of behaviour.

Evan Leibovitch <evan@telly.on.ca>:

> The morally righteous one are not the ones who do damage, you know

> ahead of time where they're coming from, and can choose to either

> confront or ignore what they say.

>

> Indeed, I have seen a rise in KTF ["Kill the Fags"] in alt.sex

> from anonymous postings, as well as KTJ postings in

> soc.culture.jewish. There'd also been a steady rise in the "two

> word" postings, from people who didn't have anything intelligent

> to add to a conversation, but figured that a few well-placed

> smartass remarks would have everyone a-titter.

>

> Have I kept examples? No, it's hardly the kind of thing I'd want

> to archive.

Karl Kleinpaste <anonymus+0@charcoal.com>:

> At this point, I am seriously uptight about server abuse and the

> seemingly inevitable death-by-abuse which such servers suffer.

> Consider that in just the last 12 months, there has been the

> death of the alt.personals server at layout.berkeley.edu, the

> alt.sex.bondage server at wizvax.methuen.ma.us, the

> multiple-group server on Godiva, and now the universal-group

> server on anon.penet.fi.

>

> It appears that a ratio of abusive:legitimate users sufficient to

> cause an anonymous server's death is approximately

> 1:2000. Hence, the sensitivity to abuse of the server is tuned

> well into the "hyper" range of the dial.

David Sternlight <strnlght@netcom.com>:

> viciously offensive and scatological anti-Arab posts have appeared

> in talk.politics.mideast, and viciously offensive and sadistic

> posts have appeared in rec.pets.cats. In both cases the purpose

> was to offend, and the poster refused to desist when asked.

> Further, the policy of the anonymous site is to warn such

> people--well after much damage has been done.

Richard E. Depew <red@redpoll.neoucom.edu>:

> We have just seen a prime example of the harm that can come from

> anonymous posting in the case of an8785. This bastard, who

> started the whole discussion in news.admin.policy by posting his

> "Challenger transcript" to sci.astro -- thereby leading several

> readers of that newsgroup to ask news.admin.policy whether

> something "can be done" about him, posted a greatly exaggerated

> version of my limited "demonstration" of ARMM to the far corners

> of USENET including such newsgroups as comp.org.eff.talk,

> alt.privacy, sci.space, sci.astro, rec.arts.books, alt.evil,

> alt.politics.homosexuality, talk.religion.misc, alt.censorship

> and, rec.arts.sf.written. These postings included the names and

> addresses of my boss and the system administrator of my

> work-place, despite the fact that my postings carried an

> organization header that read "Organization: Home, in Munroe

> Falls, OH".

>

> This anonymous bastard was spreading libel, harassing me in these

> newsgroups, and inciting a lynch mob to harass my colleagues at

> work with the clear aim of getting me fired or otherwise

> disciplined. I am convinced that what he did is clearly illegal

> under several US statutes, and if he were a non-anonymous poster

> I could have sought satisfaction in the courts with charges of

> libel, harassment, and incitement to harassment, and I could have

> sought damages and an injunction to prevent similar attacks in

> the future. However, because he was posting through

> anon.penet.fi, and because Julf refused to divulge his identity,

> there was absolutely nothing I could do about him.

"somebody":

> The service at penet was being used to slander and harass people

> who had no recourse to stop it until damage was done -- if even

> then (I have reports that complaints were not resolved). I sent

> Julf parts of two messages that would probably result in

> \*criminal\* legal action in Canada, Great Britain, and maybe the

> US -- not against him, but possibly against sites carrying the

> messages in Usenet. Furthermore (and I cannot give details at

> this time) there is at least one case where the service was being

> used to support and organize an active conspiracy to violate

> several Federal laws in a major way.

Rob Knauerhase <knauer@pegasus.cs.uiuc.edu>:

> The problem, as has been endlessly discussed, was the abuse of a

> mostly unnecessary service. Had it been limited to

> alt.I'm.afraid.to.use.my.name, it would have perhaps been

> acceptable. However, that was not the case.

>

> I bid anon.penet.fi good riddance.

\* \* \*

This is Part 3 of the Anonymity FAQ, obtained via anonymous FTP to

rtfm.mit.edu:/pub/usenet/news.answers/net-anonymity/ or newsgroups

alt.privacy, alt.answers, news.answers every 21 days.

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