“I would like to see the organisations you mentioned above such as microsoft and cisco get involved in security and freedom issues”

Hi Zubair,

Actually, Microsoft just made recent news regarding this topic. A few days ago, Microsoft revealed that the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) requested “account information about one of its enterprise customers.” (Mackie, 2014). Microsoft has fought the request citing that their privacy policy that requires they obtain customer permission first. They also said that in such matters, they “try to direct the government to get the information itself from the customer” (Mackie, 2014). In my opinion, this is a win for those that value privacy and freedom in general from an ever-intrusive government.

Regards,

Emanuel

References:

Mackie, K. (2014) ‘Microsoft Touts Resistance to an FBI Snooping Request’, *Redmond Magazine* [Online]. Available from: <http://redmondmag.com/articles/2014/05/22/microsoft-spy-request.aspx> (Accessed: 26 May 2014)

“According to Kyrnin (n.d.b), frames are not search engine friendly and do not allow pages to be indexed. This is mainly because when frames are used, index.html or whatever default page is merely the main frame the loads the content from different default content page. Unless this content page is loaded there will be no data to look at. This is not an issue for normal users loading the page through web browsers but it is an issue to search robots (Seologic, n.d.).”

Hi Ala,

Thank you for that explanation. I have no experience in web programming, so I did struggle a bit with this topic and your post has helped tremendously. Regarding robots, or “bots”, it looks like this is the way in which search engines (e.g., Bing, Google, Yahoo) actually create their databases that we all use (Indiana University, 2014). Do you know if websites can restrict robot access if they did not want to be indexed?

Reference:

Indiana University (2014) ‘What Are Web Search Robots, And How Do They Affect Me?’ *Knowledge Base* [Online]. Available from: <http://kb.iu.edu/data/aeub.html> (Accessed: 26 May 2014)

Hi everyone,

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), which is a “nonprofit organization defending civil liberties in the digital world” puts out reports every year on the companies that actually will fight to protect the data of its users. It looks like Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, and Google score their highest marks (Electronic Frontier Foundation, 2014). AT&T (whom I have a contract with), Amazon, and Snapchat rank pretty low. Comcast, whom I use for high-speed internet access at home, did not rank so high either. I may have to rethink about renewing my contract with AT&T when it ends later this year. But then again, it would be a hassle, which brings us back to which was partially covered last week, which about convenience vs. privacy.

Regards,

Emanuel

Reference:

Electronic Frontier Foundation (2014) *Who Has Your Back? Protecting Your Data from Government Requests* [Online]. Available from: <https://www.eff.org/who-has-your-back-government-data-requests-2014> (Accessed: 27 May 2014)

Hi Olatunde,

Thank you for reading my post and replying.

“Frames makes adverts, banners, sidebars, company logos and the likes visible at all times, this is very important for bloggers and website owners who use their websites to advertise and make money through it, because online visitors will see these ads regardless of the sub-web page they try to access.”

I almost forgot how common banners and ads were within website frames during the earlier days of the web (mid to late 1990s), to the point that they were almost ubiquitous. I wonder if search engines such as Google were the main reason that they went out of style, or did most web developers consider their use to be a poor design? What I remember was that some websites almost seem to have them, just for the sake of having them. On the other hand, I think there were a few websites that did use them well.

Regards,

Emanuel

Ok, since this topic is so new to me and I know close to nothing about bots, I decided to take it upon myself to research it a bit. It looks like Robots, or “bots” are programs written for the purpose of traversing “the Web's hypertext structure” (Web Robot Pages, n.d.). Their tasks are usually to index, validate, mirror, and retrieve documents. Is that a good summary, or are their important parts I may be missing?

Regards,

Emanuel

References:

Web Robot Pages (n.d.) *Frequently Asked Questions* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.robotstxt.org/faq.html> (Accesed: 28 May 2014)

“It has been stated and should be reiterated that it is important that the US congress act”

Unfortunately, there are those in congress and from my experience, those in the general public that carry the attitude of “if you’ve got nothing to hide, you’ve got nothing to fear”. For example Senator Lindsey Graham from South Carolina professed on to a group of reporters on television:

“I’m a Verizon customer. I don’t mind Verizon turning over records to the government if the government is going to make sure that they try to match up a known terrorist phone with somebody in the United States. I don’t think you’re talking to the terrorists. I know you’re not. I know I’m not. So we don’t have anything to worry about.”

(Kopan, 2013)

However, the argument of “nothing to hide” fails once you tell these people that they should share their passwords, or not put curtains or blinds to cover up their windows at home.

Regards,

Emanuel

Reference:

Kopan, T. (2013) ‘Lindsey Graham ‘glad’ NSA Tracking Phones’, *Politico* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.politico.com/story/2013/06/lindsey-graham-nsa-tracking-phones-92330.html> (Accessed: 28 May 2014)

“The need for internet privacy and quest to provide solution is becoming a challenge as it is now difficult to determine who the real perpetrators are and who will really benefit from such a solution? We could very well spend resources on the most sophisticated and unbreakable solution only to hand it over to the wrong hands. If it is freedom we seek then why bother securing the internet?”

Hi Remigius,

Thank you for your comments and this very good question. I think secure connections are needed because there will always be those whose goal is to steal information. For example, here in the United States, I do not want unauthorized access to my bank account, information, driver’s license information, and any other information that one could use to steal my property or commit fraud using my identity. Where it gets tricky is the role of government. In my opinion, the development of more secure systems is best left to the private sector. Theft and fraud are already illegal, so more laws are unnecessary. Banks and ISP that have frequent security breaches compromising customer privacy will be punished in the market place because they will lose business. Therefore, they have a major incentive to provide customers with the best security possible. I would leave the government the role of bringing law-breakers to justice.

Regards,

Emanuel

Hi Ala,

Thanks for replying. So it looks like the robots.txt file is merely a “request” that bots may or may not honor. The concept of bots is an interesting one. I was able to get a couple of free shell accounts, and I remember that among their policies was “No bots”. However, I did not know, nor did I care what they were years ago. According to Norton by Symantec (n.d.), bots can be used in cybercrime for the purpose of infecting machines, spamming , and performing “denial of service” attacks on websites (n.d.).

Regards,

Emanuel

References:

Norton by Symantec (n.d.) *Crimeware: Bots* [Online]. Available from: <http://us.norton.com/cybercrime-bots> (Accessed: 28 May 2014)