Privacy with the u.s. government, epic has

Privacy on the InternetEver feel like you are being watched? How about having the feeling like some one is following you home from school? Well that is what it will be like if users do not have the privacy on the Internet they deserve. EPIC (Electronic Privacy Information Center), a advocacy group that has been fighting the Clinton Administration for tougher online consumer protection laws, and other privacy protection agencies have formed to protect the rights and privileges of the Internet user. With the U. S.

Government, EPIC has had to step in and help small companies and Internet users with their own privacy problems, hackers getting into their systems and ruining the networks, and crackers stealing and decrypting private information. They have also helped with trying to stop the " IPv6", an every day occurring problem from eventually taking over the already used widely IP addressing system. Intel also has had a feud with the government about privacy issues. When their new chip came out, the Pentium III it had skeptic problems with its serial number feature. That is why I strongly agree with EPIC and what they are representing, privacy on the Internet.

Say you were on the Internet surfing around, would you want every site that you have visited to know who you are and almost every thing about you? No. That is why Intel had to disable their serial number feature in the new Pentium III. With this feature, each site on the Internet that you have visited could use this number to look you up and see who you are and almost every thing about you. Before released Intel told the U. S.

Senate that they had disabled this function on every chip, but when these chips where out on the market for a while, programming companies found a

way to go back in and enable this function without the computer user knowing it. So when the Senate heard this, Intel had yet another feud with its little problem. When the dust all settled Intel was to put this now option into the BIOS of every computer that had the PIII (Pentium III) installed on them. When the user opened up the BIOS there was now an option to either enable or disable the serial number on the chip.

But since not many people know how to get into the BIOS of a computer it is hard for this option to be accessed. And once again Intel was back in the courts trying to explain their reason for yet another problem. The government finally ruled that when a new PIII chip is to be installed into a computer the serial number option is to automatically be turned off. Yes, Intel had some very good reasons for this " security feature" but the public did not think so.

They tried to argue that if a chip was ever to be stolen they could track them down when the thief accessed the Internet (PC Computing 105). But how often do you hear of computer chips being stolen? Not at all. So why did Intel want to fight for this feature so much? They say because of the security over the widely growing Internet (107), but what it seems like to me and the public is mostly an invasion of the users privacy when companies get to greedy and want to know every thing about you, and your life. If it weren't for EPIC, and the government getting involved in privacy issues, Intel would have its way on what ever they want, and we would have internet sites looking us up every day breaking our personal privacy. Almost every one that has been on the Internet or that uses e-mail has heard of hacking. Hacking is very serious in some cases. How would you like a hacker to

intercept your credit card number and start using it to buy his or her own stuff? A lot of us would not like that, because the hacker is stealing from us.

When the Internet first started to develop, hackers could get into anything and do anything. They could change what ever they wanted and do what ever they please on any network. Since those days are long over, we now know how to keep hackers out of our networks and from stealing private stuff. Microsoft has now come up with the 128-bit secure line that makes it impossible for anyone to read anything on that secure line. Once you could not even dream of putting your credit card on the Internet, but now with the invention of the secure line and encryption capabilities people or now using the internet to buy more than ever.

You can now bank online or buy stocks online if you want to, but with all of these new privacy inventions there are always the hackers inventions. Hackers have invaded the privacy of the American Internet User since the dawn of the Internet. With the protection programs that we write, the hackers write their own programs to disregard our individual privacy on the Internet and hack into systems holding our private information and stealing it to reveal some of our most biggest secrets.

Encrypting private information has also been a useful tactic against hackers cracking encrypted data, and reading this private information. But they have their own ways of cracking our data. It was only not long ago that we could only encrypt up to 32-bit, and now we can encrypt up to 128-bit which makes it slightly impossible to decrypt unless you have almost all of your life to spend on solving it. But soon hackers will probably write bigger and more

complex programs to decrypt this 128-bit shell that we have and make that shell keep on going rising and rising in the numbers until not even a computer program or any hacker can access or private documents or files except us. The war on hackers is decreasing less and less each time we make new security programs, but it will not be long until the hackers, and crackers will have their turn at turning the fight around and really start attacking us. IP address.

Does that ring a bell in any e-mailer, Internet surfer, or computer game gurus mind? I think not. The IP address is the address that is assigned to your computer once you access the Internet from your ISP (Internet Service Provider). With this IP address host computers (sites you are visiting) know where to send information and not to send it to the wrong computer on any network. Think of it kind of like a postal address. Your postal address is not totally private and it does not need to be, almost like your IP address.

Your IP address is very similar to a computer identifier (identifies you, your computer, and ISP) and if things keep on going the way the government wants it to it eventually will become " IPv6". The new and under research and development IP address now will become the IPv6 with the computer identifier. This new address system would not become widely used for years but ultimately would affect every Internet user.

Critics warned that commercial Internet sites, which already routinely record IP addresses, could begin to correlate these embedded serial numbers against a consumer's name, address and other personal details, from clothing size to political information could be obtained from this (CNN). Right

now the ITEF (Internet Engineering Task Force) itself will ultimately decide whether to include the identifying numbers in the new IP addresses. But, Baker said the ITEF also envisions alternate ways to configure Internet devices so addresses won't contain the sensitive numbers (CNN). At this time, most home computer users currently are assigned a different IP address each time they connect to the Internet through a telephone line, which affords some extra security and anonymity.

But under the IETF a portion of those somewhat randomly assigned addresses could include the consumer's unique serial number—and that information would be stamped on every piece of information sent from his computer. With that in mind, the dangers worsen with Internet sites that are expected to begin to share information about their customers, and if you are visiting a new site that site could already identify you with this new system. There's no doubt there are serious privacy concerns for Internet users, about of them don't understand what is going on or just plainly don't care about the risks that are involved. And what the future will bring if we don't get our act in control? In conclusion, with our privacy at risk we the people need to become more aware of what is at stake. Our privacy on the Internet, or privacy in our lives. It is now the public's turn to speak up. We need to make our voices heard on these big privacy issues so we don't end up losing every thing that this country has worked so hard for.

We need to stand up and help EPIC and other protection agencies to help them help us. Our privacy is at stake and we need to control it, because without our privacy who knows what might happen in the years to come. Maybe people listening in on your telephone conversations or cameras in

your house to make sure you are not doing anything wrong. Stand up for what you believe and lets end this once and for all. Privacy is what every American needs and America needs privacy.

Get in the act now, privacy on the Internet.