SCI 199 L0161 Short Report #1, 2005-2006: Critique

Due on October 31st (extended in the case of those making earlier class presentations). (And you're allowed to submit it early!)

Please re-read the information about plagiarism. Your report must be your own work, and text and ideas from others must be correctly acknowledged.

Encryption and public policy

Dr Dorothy Denning is a prominent advocate of technological and policy mechanisms to try to limit the use of encryption technology where it assists criminals in evading law enforcement. Your report is to be a short critique of the published "Statement Before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information" of Dorothy E. Denning and William E. Baugh, Jr, which you can find on the web at

> `http://www.cs.georgetown.edu/~denning/crypto/Denning-Baugh-Testimony.txt`

Please note that "critique" does not mean that you say that it is bad. It refers to a careful and exact evaluation, and analysis. This often involves both positive and negative comments.

Your report will summarize the message of Dr Denning and Mr Baugh's statement concisely. Then it will go beyond this to analyze the statement, its internal logic, its implications, and its place in the wider context.

  For example: Are their conclusions about the threats to law enforcement realistic or fear-mongering? Is the role of encryption as new as they say or does it have analogues in existing obstacles to law enforcement? What options are there for public policy and what are their implications? (That is, are there options they aren't considering which they should be?) What other actors are there and what are their agendas?

  You should consult (and cite) at least one additional reference not written or co-written by Dr Denning or Mr Baugh.

  Obviously, remember that writing style matters: the organization of your paper, the logical flow of your arguments, and spelling and grammar are all important.

Your report must be less than two pages long when double-spaced and in a 12-point version of a normal font (such as Times), with one-inch margins all around (top and bottom and left and right).

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Citing web pages:

When you use a particular document (web page, book, article) as a significant source of information or ideas, you need to cite it. (In fact, if you use it even as a trivial source of information, you may want to cite it to give weight to your assertion of that information.) To cite a web page, use a format something like this:

> Alvestrand, Harald. "IAB Commentary: Architectural Concerns on the use of DNS Wildcards". http://www.iab.org/documents/docs/2003-09-20-dns-wildcards.html, 19 September 2003.

It is common with web pages to have to *guess* the date and the author. If you cannot guess the individual author, you can attribute the web page to the organization promulgating the web page if this seems

reasonable (e.g. in this case the Internet Architecture Board).

The date is an essential part of citing a web page, because web pages are frequently edited. In the absence of any date information, you should state the date on which *you* retrieved the web page (labelled as such, e.g. ''as retrieved on 9 October 2005'').

The title, also, might be tricky. In the case of this particular web page cited above, the actual <TITLE> tag (what appears in the menu bar, bookmarks, etc) says ''Internet Architecture Board – IAB Documents''. That does not seem to be the title of this article, but rather some generic text used for that section of their web site. The text which is prominently featured at the beginning of this web page in a large font seems to be the title, in a traditional magazine or newspaper style. That is, when it comes to web pages, you sometimes to use your judgement in deciding what is intended as the title of the document, as well as the author and publication date.

It is not usually necessary, in my opinion, to state that it is a web page. People recognize ''http://'' these days. You might consider your target audience, and the formality of your writing, in deciding this issue.