

# Connection Sharing Ethics Paper

## IS 280 – Data Communications Systems – Fall 2007

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The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate your understanding of the ethical issues involved in connection sharing on the Internet, and particularly on wireless networks.

The title of the paper shall be “Connection Sharing Ethics”. Below the title, your name should appear as the author of the paper, together with the due date (December 3, 2007, start of class).

Your finished paper may be shared, with your name removed, as an anonymous example of student writing from this class, or as an example of student beliefs on this subject. Therefore, for ease of name removal, this is the one and only place that your name should appear in your paper. To protect their privacy, your paper should not identify other private individuals, but you can identify the sources of information you got from the Internet or the library.

The finished paper shall be printed on normal printer paper using margins of 1.25 inches left and right, top and bottom. The font shall be Verdana (if it is available), ten points. The lines shall be single-spaced. It is expected that the paper will be about five pages in length, but longer or shorter is okay as long as you meet the other requirements. (If your paper is very short, make sure you understood the requirements properly.)

### 1 Connection Sharing

There is some debate and some rationalizing that goes on with Internet connection sharing. The sharing goes like this: Someone acquires Internet. Someone else connects to it. The people may or may not know each other. Here is a list of scenarios. Try to identify what factors make it okay or not okay in your mind.

\* I get Internet. I add a switch so my roommate can share my connection. My contract with the ISP says I must pay an extra \$10 per month for additional computers. I pay the fee. My ISP gives a separate IP address to each computer on my network. Is this okay?

\* I get Internet. I add a router so my roommate can share my connection. My contract with the ISP says I must pay an extra \$10 per month for additional computers. I believe by “computers” they really mean “IP addresses.” I do not pay the fee. My ISP gives one IP address to my router. My router gives separate local IP addresses to each computer on my network. Is this okay?

\* I get Internet. I add a router so my roommate can share my connection. My contract with the ISP is silent on additional computers, but their advertising shows an example of someone running a home network. My ISP gives one IP address to my router. My router gives separate local IP addresses to each computer on my network. Is this okay?

\* I get Internet. I add a router so my roommate can share my connection. My contract with the ISP is silent on additional computers, but their advertising shows an example of someone running a home network. My ISP gives one IP address to my router. My router gives separate local IP addresses to each computer on my network. Some students live at my house. I let them use my Internet connection for free. Is this okay?

\* I get Internet. I add a router so my roommate can share my connection. My contract with the ISP is silent on additional computers, but their advertising shows an example of someone running a home network. My ISP gives one IP address to my router. My router gives separate local IP addresses to each computer on my network. Some students live at my

house. I charge them \$10 per month to share my Internet connection. I use the money to help pay for my connection, which is \$40 per month. Is this okay?

\* I get Internet. I add a wireless router so my roommate can share my connection. My contract with the ISP is silent on additional computers, but their advertising shows an example of someone running a home network. My ISP gives one IP address to my router. My router gives separate local IP addresses to each computer on my network. I put a password (WEP key) on my wireless router so only my friends and family can connect. I don't keep track of who is sharing my connection. Is this okay?

\* I get Internet. I add a wireless router so my roommate can share my connection. My contract with the ISP is silent on additional computers, but their advertising shows an example of someone running a home network. My ISP gives one IP address to my router. My router gives separate local IP addresses to each computer on my network. I don't put a password on my wireless router. My wireless router lets anyone close connect. I don't keep track of who is sharing my connection. Is this okay?

\* My neighbor gets Internet. My computer can connect to his wireless router which does not have a password. I chat with my neighbor and ask if I can connect. He says okay. I routinely connect and do my email using his Internet. Is this okay?

\* My neighbor gets Internet. My computer can connect to his wireless router which does not have a password. Without asking, I routinely connect and do my email using his Internet. Is this okay?

\* My neighbor gets Internet. My computer can connect to his wireless router. It has a password which I eventually guessed. (It is his wife's name.) Without asking, I routinely connect and do my email using his Internet. Is this okay?

\* I am visiting friends far from home. My computer can connect to his neighbor's wireless router which does not have a password. Without asking, for several days I routinely connect and do my email using his Internet. Is this okay?

\* I am visiting friends far from home. The public library has wireless Internet inside. My computer can connect without a password. Without asking, for several days I routinely walk into the library, sit in full view of the librarians, connect and do my

email using their Internet. Is this okay?

\* I am visiting friends far from home. The public library has wireless Internet. My computer can connect without a password. Without asking, for several days I routinely sit in my car in the Library parking lot and connect and do my email using their Internet. Is this okay?

## 2 Analysis of Ethics

This topic was chosen because (a) ethics is important but difficult, (b) the area of Internet Connection Sharing still seems to be in the gray area where right and wrong are not generally agreed upon, and (c) you should be able to understand and skillfully argue both sides of the question.

It is probably okay for me to stand below my neighbors street light and look at a map. It is probably not okay for me to plug in an extension cord to my neighbors garage and use it to power my house. Is it okay to connect a cable to my neighbor's TV cable to watch TV?

What are the factors that make Internet Connection Sharing right or wrong, okay or not okay? Are there any laws relating to "theft of services" that would apply? When would it be theft?

In days gone by, it was forbidden to use your office telephone to conduct personal business. Now the courts have held that is an unenforceable rule, and many people so use their office telephones. Is there a problem?

In days gone by, it was forbidden to use your office computer for personal activities. In a famous case some years ago, before personal computers were common, an employee was fired for updating his resume using the computer at his job. Now the courts have held that is an unenforceable rule, and many people use their office computers for all kinds of things, including shopping on eBay. Is there a problem?

What does it mean in this context to say that you are honest in your dealings with your fellow man?

### 3 Section 1: Introduction

Start your paper with a brief introduction of the problem: when is it okay to share Internet that someone else has paid for. Include the following sections.

### 4 Section 2: Pro Sharing

In this section of your paper, outline a position in favor of freely sharing the Internet. Assume that if a connection is available without a password, it is okay to connect and use it.

Defend this position (whether you personally believe it or not). You should search the Internet for what others have said in support of this position, or what actual laws might exist in various places, and include brief excerpts (quotations) properly attributed to the original author and giving the URL where you found their comments.

### 5 Section 3: Anti Sharing

In this section of your paper, outline a position against freely sharing the Internet. Assume that even if a connection is available without a password, and your neighbor says it is okay with him for you to use it, it is still wrong.

Defend this position (whether you personally believe it or not). You should search the Internet for what others have said in support of this position, or what actual laws might exist in various places, and include brief excerpts (quotations) properly attributed to the original author and giving the URL where you found their comments.

### 6 Section 4: Personal Ethics

In this section of your paper, explain where you currently think you should draw the line between okay and not okay. Use your own personal best judgment. Remember that this is not a settled issue. Remember that you may change your mind in the future after thinking more about it.

Explain your reasoning for drawing the line where you did.

### 7 Section 5: Response by Friends

In this section of your paper, include comments by friends.

Have at least two friends read your paper, with special emphasis on the personal beliefs section. Make a note of their comments. On which points do they agree with you? On which points do they differ. Summarize their comments in this section. Tell whether and how their comments influence your feelings.

Do not identify your friends by name.

### 8 Grading

This paper is worth 50 points, which is 5% of your final grade.

Points are earned for completing major parts of the assignment.

Clarity: Can I understand what you are saying? (Clear, a little confusing, a lot confusing)

Pro: Did you skillfully support the pro-sharing position?

Con: Did you skillfully support the anti-sharing position?

Personal: Did you skillfully express and support a personal position?

Friends: Did you clearly express and respond to comments by at least two of your friends?

Redaction: Did you avoid identifying yourself and your friends except right below the title of the paper?

You should be able to get full credit by doing a reasonable job. You will lose points if you don't complete the task.