

All's fair in love and Carnivore

FBI's email-tapping system a necessary advance in law enforcement

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) recently unleashed Carnivore, an Internet eavesdropping device. Carnivore is a combination of hardware and software, like a personal computer but specialized to sort through large amounts of Internet traffic. It connects directly to an Internet service provider's (ISP) network and monitors all incoming and outgoing email from that ISP. The system can also monitor online chat rooms, instant message systems and visits to Websites. The FBI says that Carnivore will sort through the information, and only a suspect's account will be read by members of the FBI.



BRIENNE PORTER

However, many groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), have protested the system. According to these groups, privacy rights of all Internet users are violated by this new technology. Even though there are many privacy issues and possibilities for abusing the system, the FBI has created a piece of technology that can combat the ever-increasing number of illegal activities conducted on the Internet. With strict regulation of Carnivore, the system will be a much-needed progress in law enforcement capabilities for the technological age. Many of Carnivore's critics have said that it is a problem because the FBI will be able to read not only the email addresses and messages of the person listed in the court order, but also those of other law-abiding citizens. While this is a frightening possibility, legislation is already being proposed by the White House and Congress to regulate Carnivore's use. Clinton's proposal will put many of the same regulations on Internet wiretaps as on present-day telephone wiretaps. Law-enforcement agencies will have to show probable cause to obtain a court-ordered Internet wiretap of a suspect's account. Also, people with cable modem ac-

cess to the Internet will have even more protection against the wiretaps under the Cable Act of 1984. This act requires law-enforcement agencies to notify the suspect under the surveillance and gives him or her the right to challenge the request.

In response to the administration's proposal, the ACLU argues that it is too broad and gives more freedoms to the FBI than older technology. The complaints of the ACLU and other privacy advocates are legitimate, but they fail to see the necessity of improving technology to track criminals on the information superhighway.

Other critics, including ISP companies, claim that all users will suffer when the FBI connects Carnivore to their networks. EarthLink, an Internet provider, tried to compromise with the FBI and use its own system. Earthlink promised it would then give the FBI the requested information. When the FBI decided that it still wanted to use Carnivore, and EarthLink objected, a federal court ruled that the ISP must allow the FBI to install Carnivore on Earthlink's system.

The Carnivore system caused outages for EarthLink subscribers in March because it was not compatible with older versions of the ISP. Companies do not have any techni-

cal details of the Carnivore system, so they are unable to predict how Carnivore will affect their Internet networks. This complaint should be addressed by the FBI. If the FBI wants to protect its system's details from Internet hackers, it could offer these companies a basic overview of the Carnivore system and how it will affect different ISPs. This way the integrity of Carnivore will be protected and the ISPs can prepare for possible problems.

By taking initiative and addressing such problems, the FBI will encounter more cooperation from other companies. The FBI could research what effects Carnivore has on different ISPs and pass the information along to these companies. In this way, the FBI protects the technical aspects of the system

while companies can continue to serve their customers.

Though Carnivore is a dramatic advancement in law-enforcement technology, it is a necessary one. Since criminals have access to modern modes of communication, federal agencies must be allowed access to the same technology. Though privacy issues and technical difficulties are a concern, the FBI's system needs to be recognized as essential for fighting crime. This technology calls for cooperation with all sectors of society. Once the complaints of the privacy groups and ISP companies are addressed and resolved, Carnivore will be able to help close cases that the FBI could not solve before.

Brienne Porter is a sophomore chemical engineering major.



BRANDON HENDERSON/THE BATTALION

Court backlog cleared by more staff, fewer tickets

Many Aggies have recently found themselves waiting up to six months to go to court to take care of a ticket they received from the College Station Police Department (CSPD). This wait is due to the backlog of pretrial conferences at the College Station Municipal Court.



SUNNYE OWENS

In College Station, a person pleading not guilty must have a pretrial conference to meet with a prosecuting attorney and discuss their case. Since most of the lawyers can attend pretrial conferences only twice a week, the system is extremely overloaded. The court attributes this backlog to lawyers' tight schedules and limited staff.

To combat the delay in processing tickets the court needs to hire more personnel, and, in the meantime, CSPD needs to reduce the number of tickets it writes.

There are two main factors contributing to the ticket backlog. First, the court's lack of staff, and second, as Julie Kuder, court administrator, pointed out, the court's lack of space for holding pretrial conferences. To fight this second problem, the court has presented a plan to the College Station City

Council requesting the construction of a 32,000-square-foot structure.

If the courts are backed up until January and there are 33 pretrial conferences a week, then there are roughly 800 cases currently awaiting court dates. Without enough personnel or court space to handle this workload, the court is facing a huge problem. The court needs to hire more personnel to deal with this backlog and the city council must approve the court's proposal for additional facilities.

While the court deals with its backlog, CSPD needs to understand that the court cannot handle such a large number of tickets.

The pretrial conferences per week at the Court deal with everything from minor offenses to death cases. Thirty-three a week is a remarkably high number considering that

these conferences only represent the number of people who have pleaded not guilty to their violation.

"Many of the people who plead not guilty and have a pre-trial conference are unhappy with part of their ticket," Kuder said. This statement raises the question of why so many College Station residents are unhappy with their tickets.

Perhaps people are upset about their tickets because many of them are undeserved. Considering that currently, citizens of College Station who get a ticket

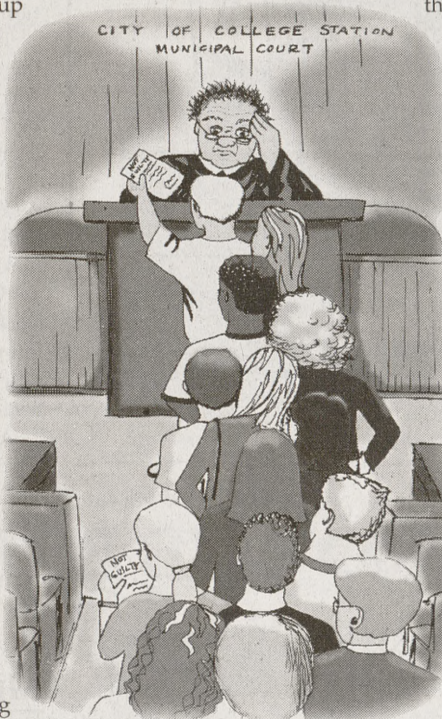
January, it is quite possible that too many tickets are being given out by CSPD.

Another problem associated with the court date delay is that it is inconvenient for an Aggie who has already graduated and might now be in a different city or state to come back to College Station to take care of a ticket or other legal matter that occurred six months ago.

CSPD could help the court fight its ticket backlog by decreasing the number of tickets written. CSPD needs to be more flexible with its citizens, who, after all, pay their salaries. Most tickets given out are deserved, but to slow the tide of tickets clogging the system, CSPD ought to give more warnings instead of tickets.

The court and police of College Station must recognize the problem the court is facing with the number of pretrial conferences it is waiting to hear. It is obvious that the court is backed up beyond its means. To deal with this, the courts should hire more personnel and the city council must approve the court's expansion plans. In the meantime, CSPD should reduce the number of tickets written while the court deals with the cases already waiting pretrial conferences.

Sunnys Owens is a junior journalism major.



KELSEY ROBERTS/THE BATTALION

Mail Call

Readers comment on Al Khalifa case

In response to Cayla Carr's July 25 column.

First of all, I believe that Pfc. Johnson's use and abuse of his military privileges to bring Mariam Al Khalifa to the United States is not acceptable behavior. However, the couple should not have ever been forced to consider this course of action as a viable option.

Immigration laws represent everything America is not. The framers of the Declaration of Independence in fact specifically listed immigration laws as an abuse of power by King George III. They rec-

ognized that all men were endowed with certain unalienable rights, and that it was wrong for any governing authority to limit the scope of those rights.

The government should not be allowed to regulate where anyone can and cannot live. I have no right to tell me, you, Al Khalifa or anyone else where or how we ought to live. Unfortunately, the government believes that our private business is inherently their business.

Brad Gray
Class of '03

I have to disagree with Carr's suggestion to discharge Pfc. Johnson. Granted, he did forge military documents to get his soon-to-be wife into the country, but his ac-

tions are not worthy of a Bad Conduct Discharge.

After serving four years of active duty in the military, I have seen actions worse than Pfc. Johnson's were punished the same as Johnson's, but never was a Bad Conduct Discharge issued. Pfc. Johnson has to endure hard physical labor, he has to check in with a non-commissioned officer or officer every hour, and possibly is restricted to the barracks where he cannot spend his evenings with his wife.

I have known military personnel who have three DUI's to their name, but they were never discharged.

What is worse: Bringing someone to this country whom you love under false credentials, or driving

under the influence of alcohol where you risk hundreds of peoples' lives each time you get behind the wheel?

Pfc. Johnson will go through enough punishment, and Carr needs to realize that the military is not going to discharge people every time they do something wrong. The military takes care of its own.

Patrick Glazener
Class of '02

JFK is dead, both of them

In response to Mark Passwaters' July 25 column.

I totally agree with Passwaters

in regards to the misplaced honors and emotion bestowed on the late JFK Jr. Another illustration of the excessive response was his burial at sea as directed by the president, a privilege usually reserved for members of the uniformed services and "other U.S. citizens who are determined eligible by notable service or outstanding contributions to the United States."

Not only was Kennedy buried at sea, but he jumped to the head of the line in front of a backlog of well-deserving deceased veterans who honorably served and fought wars for their country. Indeed, this was the real tragedy.

Mike Thornton
Graduate Student

Change requires strong leaders

More than 25 years ago, Jake Ayers, the father of a Jackson State University student, filed a suit which still boggles the minds of state officials today. Ayers said that the state's black universities were not receiving state funding equal to that of their white counterparts. Since 1975, the case has been winding in and out of courts.

Whenever a problem arises that is somehow associated with the Ayers case, someone often says, "change takes time" or something similar to that. In Sunday's *Clarion-Ledger*, it was College Board member Ricki Garrett.

On July 7, U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers ruled that Alcorn State University and Mississippi Valley State University cannot receive \$3.5 million in state funds because they have not followed orders to attract more white students to the universities. Garrett said she was disappointed by the judge's decision and that recruiting white students to black universities "won't happen overnight."

Garrett is right. Ole Miss did not get its 1999 black enrollment figure to 11.4 percent

If it became necessary to cut the funding of Ole Miss, could state leaders even consider such

overnight. It took Ole Miss 16 years to increase its black population from 7.2 percent in 1980 to 11.2 percent, or by 4 percent, in 1996. During those 16 years, percentages rose and fell,

dropping at one point to 5.6 percent. But by 1996, the numbers had begun to hold steady around 11 percent.

Time is important, but initiative is vital, and initiative in solving the Ayers case seems to be lacking. If Gov. Ronnie Musgrove wants to end the Ayers case by the end of this year, it will take some powerful initiative and impressive leadership. Someone is going to have to make some hard decisions.

For example, as College Board member Roy Klumb pointed out in Sunday's *Clarion-Ledger*, "we have too damn many schools." Klumb said the whole system needs re-working. Maybe Klumb is right. With a population of 2.8 million, Mississippi has eight state-supported schools. Arkansas, with a population of 2.6 million, has only six, and Tennessee, with nearly twice the population of Mississippi, has seven.

Some of Mississippi's schools may have to be combined. Delta State University and Mississippi Valley State University are less than an hour away from each other. Of course, combining the two would likely upset quite a few DSU and MVSU alums. If push came to shove, would state leaders be able to tell these alums that the combination is vital to solving the Ayers case?

Or if it became necessary to cut the funding of Ole Miss, could state leaders, many of whom are part of "the Ole Miss family," even consider such an option?

Decisions like these will not be made by leaders who talk about the time change takes. They can only be made by leaders who talk about the changes they will make.

Before Ole Miss officials could talk about the time involved in recruiting more black students, one black student had to enter the university. The 1962 integration of Ole Miss took tear gas and U.S. marshals.

Surely a full integration of Mississippi's state universities will come and will not require the same physical force or the involvement of the federal government. What it will require is determined leadership.

Pamela Hamilton is a columnist for the Daily Mississippian at the U. of Mississippi.

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