LSTU E-130: Intellectual Property Law and the Internet
Lab Assignment #1 -- Due March 7, 2005

Note: Lab assignments should be e-mailed to David Albert, albert@fas.harvard.edu, by the due date.

Important: when sending assignments as attachments, please include YOUR NAME as part of the filename of the attachment, and also include your name in the document itself! I will be separating the attachments from the email body, so if your file is just called "Lab1.doc" it’s hard for me to tell who sent it.

Part A - IP and Trace Route

(1) Find the IP address, and, if it exists, the full hostname of the computer you are using for this assignment (which must be connected to the Internet). The computer can be at home, work, library, or anywhere else. You can use an online service such as http://www.whatismyipaddress.com/ or any other method you are comfortable with.

(2) Go to http://www.traceroute.org and use any server located outside the United States to trace a route from that server to the machine you use for this assignment (at work, home, library, or wherever).

   (a) State the name and country of origin of the server you chose.

   (b) Copy and paste the complete traceroute into your assignment solution.

   (c) How many different router computers do packets go through between the traceroute server you chose and your computer? Can you identify each major service provider used along the way? Who is YOUR computer's service provider, and which provider is used at the other end of the route?

   (d) How long does it take packets to reach your machine from the server you selected?

Note: You may need to try several different traceroute servers before you find one that works for you. Some of the links are outdated, and some are simply too slow. If you've tried a whole bunch without success, it is possible that the computer you are working from is behind a firewall preventing traceroute packets from reaching it. In that case, just give as much information as you can, or use a different computer to complete the assignment if that is practical.

Part B - Reading Website Source Code

Look at the source code for the website http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~albert/lstul30/lab1site.html and tell me:

(1) The HTML tag used to pull up the image you see on the page. Who really is hosting that image?
(2) The HTML source code used to provide the link to the "famous governmental organization"
(3) The HTML source code used to provide the link to the article (which I really do want you to read).
PART C - Copied Without Permission on the Usenet

Part of the task of understanding copyright online is to have an understanding of all the venues in which communication, and hence copyright violations, can occur. In class, you learned about one such venue, once known as the "Usenet". These online discussion groups still exist, as does a vast archive of over a billion (1,000,000,000) postings dating back to the early 1980's. You will find this archive at http://groups.google.com.

Using "Search" at groups.google.com gives you access to a complete text search of every article in the archive. The search engine is sophisticated enough to permit searching on full phrases, and this ability can give rise to some interesting ways of finding information. So, a search on the phrase "copied without permission"

may lead not only to requests that one's material not be copied without permission, or to a discussion of fair use, but also to explicit admission that one's own postings are in apparent violation of copyright law.

Try the above search to see what you come up with. See if you can find an article in which a poster admits to copying something without permission (NOT just a complaint that someone else is doing so).

Then try searching on other phrases to see if you can discover other potential examples of copyright law violations. For instance, you could search for specific passages from books or articles you know are protected by copyright, or for other phrases that might indicate that a passage was inappropriately copied.

For the most interesting example you find in your research, record the following:

(a) The phrases or keywords you used for your search;

(b) The header of the article (who it is from, the group it was posted to, the date it was posted, and the subject of the post).

(c) A small part of the article (or the whole if it is very short) that you believe may be infringing someone’s copyright.

(d) Your best guess as to whose copyright may have been infringed.

(e) A brief analysis (one or two sentences) of whether you think the person who posted this article has a reasonable fair-use defense.