

# STUDENT LIFE

## Ask ASCII: Is 'War Driving' actually illegal?

By Logan Stack  
staff writer

Dear ASCII.  
You talked about War Driving last week, and said that it could be illegal. What exactly does the law say?  
- Nervous

Dear Nervous,  
Last week I wrote about War Driving. This, for those of you who foolishly neglected to read my column last week, is motoring around looking for wireless networks. Those are networks of computers that can be connected to without wires, you know, like connecting to the Internet at Starbucks while drinking that \$3.75 latte. This week I want to talk about a new Pennsylvania law which may criminalize certain types of War Driving. As I said last week, if you don't actually connect to the network, you've done nothing wrong. However, depending on how the law is interpreted, "borrowing" someone's Internet connection may be illegal.

The law is Pennsylvania's Act 226 of 2002. It hasn't really been tested in courts, so no one knows how it will be interpreted once it gets before a judge.

In the meantime, bear with me as I try to make its legal language understandable. Section 7611 says, "A person commits the offense of unlawful use of a computer if he: intentionally and without authorization accesses or exceeds authorization to access ... any computer, computer system, computer network ..."

That means if you're sitting at Starbucks and accidentally connect to the network belonging to the geek next door, you're fine. But if you go around the city with a laptop, intentionally trying to find and connect to networks that you know you're not authorized to use, that's probably a crime.

However, the law also says, "it is a

defense to an action [if] the actor: reasonably believed that he had the authorization or permission of the owner." (section 7605)  
This could cover war driving, as the courts may decide that you can "reasonably believe that you had authorization" when you notice a network set up to allow anyone to connect to it. That, of course, will depend on how the courts choose to interpret the language.

This law is sweeping. It covers everything from defacing IBM's web site to writing a virus. It is written in very broad terms and says that a computer is a "high speed data processing device or system which performs logic, arithmetic, or memory functions." Under that definition, if your boss's secretary can file documents quickly, the secretary might qualify as a computer. Of course, the original definition of a computer was "one who computes," (Webster's 1913 Dictionary) so it seems rather fitting that the secretary counts as one under this new law.

In addition, the law's definition of a "computer virus" could land a programmer in jail if he "knowingly sells, gives or otherwise distributes... computer software or a computer program that is designed or has the capability to: ... degrade, disable, damage, or destroy the performance of a computer" (section 7616). Some geeks would say Microsoft Windows should be prosecuted under that definition for its propensity to use up all of a computer's memory until the user is forced to reboot because operations go too slowly.

Also deemed illegal is sending joke e-mails. The law says you can't send mail "with the intent to falsify or forge electronic mail transmission information" (section 7661). That could include sending mail from an e-mail address which you don't own, like all the old pranks where you send an e-mail to your friend from billy\_g@microsoft.com or dubya@whitehouse.gov could be illegal. The upshot of

that is that any spammer who sends you mail from your address or the address of your friend probably has committed a crime too.

Unfortunately, your spammer won't be forced to wear stripes for it because under the law this is a misdemeanor, with a maximum fine of \$2,500 and no jail time. Before you start imagining the spammer paying \$2,500 for each the tens of thousands of people he mails, you have to keep in mind that part of this falsification is almost always to conceal the original sender, making it nearly impossible to track down whoever could be paying millions of dollars in fines.

So what happens if you're spammed by someone in Florida or someone in Pennsylvania defaces a web site in Utah? A translation of the legalese in section 7602 says "an offense was committed either where they did it or where the victimized computer was." The person from Florida can be extradited to a Pennsylvania court, and Pennsylvania will indict a local criminal for defacing the web site in Utah.

The law isn't that obtuse or long. You can read it online at <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/BI/BT/2001/0/SB1402P2429>. HTM. However, as the law itself points out, it's certainly not the only regulation on the subject; there are additional federal and state laws addressing computer issues.

**Pennsylvania Act 226 of 2002 states that it is illegal to intentionally access another person's wireless network.**

## Murders and wages draw group to Mexico



THECITIESOF.COM  
This year, eight University of Kansas students travelled to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, pictured above, to participate in community service.

By Lynn Franey  
Knight Ridder Newspapers  
(KRT)

Rachel Mehl's done the community-service thing for spring break three times: senior year in high school and freshman and sophomore years at the University of Kansas.

She's taking eight other KU students to Ciudad Juarez, a poor, sprawling Mexican border town just across from El Paso, Texas. There they hope to learn about the economic, gender, and political issues surrounding the murders of hundreds of girls and young women and the problems with the investigations.

Sound dry and intellectual for the week when college students are supposed to get a break from bookwork?

Not to Mehl, a 22-year-old from Lawrence, Kan. The idea of going to Ciudad Juarez emerged from her work on an honor's thesis about women's lives as manifestations of border issues such as human-rights abuses, labor exploitation and gender inequality. More than 300 girls and young women have been found murdered, many of them disfigured, raped, and bearing evidence of torture in the Ciudad Juarez area in the past decade. Most of the murders have gone unsolved.

The group left recently for the 900-mile drive to El Paso, where they will stay all week. The students are paying for the trip themselves, Mehl said. It costs about \$250 per person for food, lodging and transportation.

"I think a lot of people, including myself, start with community service. That's an easy way to start giving back to your community. Everybody can see that's a good thing," Mehl said.

## College graduates delay entrance to the Real World

By Aline Mendelsohn  
The Orlando Sentinel  
(KRT)

Most of Kate Alexander's friends are stressing out about getting into law school or landing a job. But Alexander, 21, has no intention of plunging into the real world right away.

After she graduates from Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla., in May, Alexander and fellow English major Christine Bradford will house-sit in Santa Fe, N.M., while working temp jobs and saving money for a jaunt to London on a six-month work visa.

What will they be doing there? They're not sure. But one thing they do know: They aren't ready to resign themselves to a 9-to-5 office job and two weeks of annual vacation.

Like Alexander and Bradford, an increasing number of twenty-somethings are detouring around the corporate world. University officials don't have exact figures, but they report that more and more graduates are taking time off to travel, volunteer, work abroad or pursue their passions.

Colleen Kinder calls it the "anti-cubicle revolution."

Kinder, the author of "Delaying the Real World: A Twenty-something's Guide to Seeking Adventure," spent a year working at nursing homes in Cuba and urges graduates to explore their options.

"There is no rush to be boring," Kinder says.

Time off can strengthen young people's independence and critical-thinking skills and broaden their perspective on the world, says Nadene Francis, assistant director for public relations in the Career Resource Center at the University of Florida.

"It can be an exciting time, something that recharges them and gives them goals," Francis says.

twenty-somethings have more options than ever, says Jeffrey Arnett, a professor of psychology at the University of Maryland.

Because more are waiting to marry and start families, they are creating a period when they're not strongly committed to adult roles.

"A lot are very reluctant to get on that (corporate) track," says Arnett, author of "Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties."

"Once you're on it, it's hard to get off. Once you do get married and have children and have a long-term career path, you're going to be on that road for the rest of your adult life until you retire."

Of course, some graduates have no choice but to start chipping away at their student loans.

The price of a college education continues to rise, and with it, student debt. The average college graduate leaves school owing \$17,000 to \$20,000 in college loans, according to the Princeton Review, which publishes annual academic guidebooks.

Those who financed their educations through

parent contributions, work-study, scholarships or financial aid can afford to be more flexible. And society has become more accepting of alternative plans after college, Arnett says.

Yet it's still not the norm in this country. In the United Kingdom, taking time off is a tradition known as a "gap year." In Australia, an extended period of travel is seen as a rite of passage.

But in the United States, it's work, work, work. "There's a real sense that you need to immediately engage yourself in the career world," says Rolf Potts, author of Vagabonding, a guide to long-term global travel. "The Puritan work ethic has been such a huge part of the culture."

Too strong a work ethic early in life can lead to regret later in life, another author says.

Matt MacKelcan has never been one to follow the herds.

When he was a communications major at Appalachian State University in North Carolina, MacKelcan took a year off and worked at a golf course in Hilton Head, S.C.

The time off helped him realize what he really wanted to do: pursue music professionally. MacKelcan returned to school and earned a degree in vocal music from Rollins College. Since graduating in 2003, he has been chasing his musical dreams full time.

The Matt MacKelcan Band has played throughout the country, from Austin, Texas, to Philadelphia, and MacKelcan hopes to launch a

"A lot are very reluctant to get on that (corporate) track."

- Jeffery Arnett  
author

college tour later this year. In general, though, the work is unsteady. Sometimes MacKelcan will play nine shows in two weeks. Other times he'll perform much less frequently and supplement his income with his job at a restaurant in Winter Park.

MacKelcan constantly worries about money. But when he's onstage, all of those worries disappear and he thinks, "There's nothing else I'd rather be doing."

Alexander knows the feeling. During her junior year, she spent a semester in London and fell in love with the city. Bradford, who lived in London the following semester, had a similar experience.

"Everyone comes back from London saying they'll go back," Alexander says.

She and Bradford decided to actually do it. Bradford says her mother was at first dismayed with her plans. For a while, the two didn't speak.

Christine Bradford can't wait to graduate and embark on her adventure. "It's the first time where I don't know what the next step will be," she says.

## Improv: one legged pirate transforms into a hooker

By Jason Della Sala  
staff writer

Improv is the improvisation of an act or situation in front of an audience. The Behrend community has been brought to attention by a week with student improvisation.

Improv has spread across the Behrend campus like wildfire, leading the student body to an uproar of excitement. Improv has brought students together from all backgrounds, all to have a good time.

Improv has rocked the Behrend community for several years. For many years, students have stood up in front of an audience and ad libbed out scenes without a script. The only thing that has changed since the beginning of improv has been the number of students that attend weekly. The admission has steadily increased over years and continues to grow, making improv more successful every year.

Improv is usually held in the studio theater, except for when the campus is sponsoring a play. Only then is improv moved to a new location with many signs posted around campus to bring awareness of the change.

"I went to improv for the first time the other day and I was blown away by the amount of fun I had. It was an experience that I want to have every week. I pretended I died! Everyone should experience the same thrill," said Brianne Lilly, WLE 02.

The Matchbox Players sponsors improv for the students to have a chance to express their acting talents. Several students volunteer to act out a scene in front of an audience, thinking of their own lines and jokes in a, usually, five minute time span.

A student can act out a scene as a one-legged pirate and, one minute later, act as a hooker. Only in improv can you show that kind of talent.

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