Interrogating Internet Infrastructure using a Broadband Analysis Tool

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Our lives are interlinked with the Internet. We use it to communicate with peers, engage in financial transactions, promote productivity, and lower costs of accessing knowledge. Unfortunately, our dependencies on data networks have not been accompanied by appropriate transparency into how Internet Service Providers (ISPs) maintain or provision networks, or how they mediate data traffic. I want to encourage such transparency.

A group of advocates and researchers are trying to identify what services ISPs *actually* provide their customers. We want to create an open-source tool that collects data on users' broadband connections. The tool will identify users' geographic location, maximum throughput speeds, average speeds, latency, and other technical characteristics of their connection.

The tool will be freely available and publicly promoted by well-connected advocates. Once empirical data is collected we can work towards more open, accessible, first-class Internet infrastructures by:

- Developing more potent network neutrality campaigns;
- Better challenging ISPs' claims in regulatory hearings with our own data;
- Generally increase the transparency of ISPs' network infrastructure.

Effective network neutrality and transparency advocacy and research is dependent on independently collected broadband data. Help us gather this data by supporting the development of the broadband analysis tool.

Bio:

Christopher Parsons is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Victoria. His research interests focus on how privacy (particular informational privacy, expressive privacy, and accessibility privacy) is affected by digitally mediated surveillance, and the normative implications such surveillance has in (and on) Western political systems. He research focuses on deep packet inspection technologies, mobile security, and Internet architecture. He tries to think through how these technologies and systems affect how citizens openly express themselves or engage in self-censoring behaviour on a regular basis.

Christopher's dissertation is titled "What's Driving Deep Packet Inspection? Motivations, Regulations, and Public Involvement in Telecommunications Regulatory processes, " which draws together Internet governance, traditional social sciences, and critical digital studies literatures to provide a holistic account of deep packet inspection's powerful and plastic control-based processes. He has published in *CTheory*, has a forthcoming publication in M. Moll's and L. R. Shade's (eds.) *Establishing an Election Connection: Telecom Policy*, and a forthcoming co-authored publication in W. Dutton's (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies*. He writes publicly at his website, Technology, Thoughts, and Trinkets (URL: http://www.christopher-parsons.com).