

Wow

A week ago (sadly, my most recent blog post) I blogged about a school district monitoring their students by remotely turning on the webcams of their school-issued laptops. This story has really ballooned. On one site I have been following a thread about it and many links have been posted. Here are a few—click the titles for the full articles:

[Lower Pervian School District vs. Mike and Ikes](#)

...AP reports the FBI is investigating the school district's webcam program, and district spokesman Doug Young suggests without claiming that Harriton High School student Blake J. Robbins' webcam was activated only because the laptop had been reported stolen – in accordance with an established policy. The boy was charged with an undisclosed infraction based on an image the school picked up from his webcam. District superintendent Christopher W. McGinley, in an orotund statement, defends the program while canceling it. And just to make clear that we're still in high school, Master Robbins appears to have gotten in trouble when he was photographed eating Mike and Ikes...

[Federal judge orders Pa. schools to stop laptop spying](#)

...Yesterday, U.S. District Court Judge Jan DuBois issued a consent order that prevents Lower Merion School District of Ardmore, Pa., from "remotely activating any and all web cams

embedded in lap top [sic] computers issued to students ... or from remotely taking screenshots of such computers."

Lower Merion spokesman Doug Young said today that the district would fully cooperate with the court order...

The Spy at Harriton High (and more)

...The truly amazing part of this story is what's coming out from comments from the students themselves. Some of the interesting points:

- *Possession of a monitored Macbook was required for classes*
- *Possession of an unmonitored personal computer was forbidden and would be confiscated*
- *Disabling the camera was impossible*
- *Jailbreaking a school laptop in order to secure it or monitor it against intrusion was an offense which merited expulsion*

When I spoke at MIT about the wealth of electronic evidence I came across regarding Chinese gymnasts, I used the phrase "compulsory transparency". I never thought I would be using the phrase to describe America, especially so soon, but that appears to be exactly the case...

Software maker blasts 'vigilantism' in Pa. school spying case

The company selling the software used by a Pennsylvania school district to allegedly spy on its students blasted what

it called laptop theft-recovery “vigilantism” today.

Absolute Software said it dissuades users of theft-recovery software from acting on their own. “We discourage any customer from taking theft recovery into their own hands,” said Stephen Midgley, the company’s head of marketing, in an interview Monday. “That’s best left in the hands of professionals.”...

There is now a [Wikipedia page](#) about the ongoing investigation of this lawsuit, though the blogs and articles (full of even more links for your perusal by the way) are more interesting IMHO.

Next up, something about my own unexciting life. Hopefully. ☐

How Far is Too Far?

Besides being a song from a show I was in once, this is a question we ask ourselves over and over again as the government or some other entity does some eyebrow-raising stunt. It seems a lot of such stunts have occurred in the recent decades, and this one isn’t going to make you feel better. The question here is, what should a school be allowed to do to keep tabs on their students or the school property they use, in this case laptop computers? A lawsuit has been brought against a school district for remotely activating webcams when the computer is off-site. This came to light when a school had the gall to discipline a student for something that happened at his home using webcam footage as evidence. Now I can fully understand monitoring computer use

when the computers are at the school. After all, at school students should be engaged in schoolwork. But at home? It isn't mentioned just what the student did at home, but even if it had something to do with the computer, should the school really be allowed to turn on the webcam? What if the student left his or her computer open in the bedroom while undressing for the night or to shower? I really hope this school goes down for this, but not with some big financial settlement as it would be the taxpayers of course who wind up paying. What a stupid decision, in my humble opinion of course. Here is the article:

[BoingBoing: School used student laptop webcams to spy on them at school and home](#)

School used student laptop webcams to spy on them at school and home

Who wants to be a superhero?

No, Sci-Fi channel (or should I say [SyFy?](#)) didn't renew [Stan Lee's reality show](#) for a third season. But apparently 106 5th and 6th grade students in Berwick, Maine wanted to be superheroes. Or at least dress up as them. After a university in the UK set a Guinness record of the most people in one room dressed as superheroes with 103 students and staff members a teacher at Knowlton School decided to try and break

the record. Their new record, if their attempt is accepted (i.e. no one else tried for the same record with more people), might be short lived though as the university vowed to take back the record if anyone were to break it so whether or not they will be in the next [Guinness World Records](#) book depends on how quickly this university can respond. It may well be that the teachers at the Maine school were clever with their timing as summer time means break time so it may not be until fall or later when the university tries to take back the record. For the full story (with pics!), click the link below:

[‘Superhero’ students gather in Berwick to set new Guinness World Record](#)

What Koolaid have you been drinking?

This is a sort of a non-alcoholic version asked of someone when he or she says something crazy. A less rude way I suppose than asking, “What drugs have you been taking?” or, “Are you drunk??” In this story the answer is it wasn’t Koolaid at all, but a case of mistaken identity- wind-shield washer fluid. Yipes. Click the link in the title for the full article.

[**10 drink windshield wiper fluid at Ark. day care**](#)

By JON GAMBRELL – 7 hours ago

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) – Ten children drank windshield wiper fluid after a staffer at an Arkansas day care mistakenly put the liquid in a refrigerator and served it, hospital officials said Friday.

Doctors estimate the children, ages 2 to 7, drank about an ounce of the blue fluid late Thursday afternoon before realizing it tasted wrong, said Laura James, a pediatric pharmacologist and toxicologist at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock.

Only one child remained hospitalized Friday morning, after blood samples showed "measurable levels" of methanol, a highly toxic alcohol that can induce comas and cause blindness, officials said. The day care also provided the fluid for testing.

"All we know was that the individual at the day care had recently shopped and had come back to the day care with a lot of different products," James told The Associated Press. "This product was mistakenly grabbed and thought to be Kool-Aid and put in the refrigerator."

What a mistake! Thankfully it looks like all the kids are almost all okay. I pray that the one still hospitalized is as well.

As the basketball turns



An interesting story hit the Christian school news recently about one girls high school team that beat another in basketball 100-0. No, that's not a typo. There has been much

drama about it since Christians are of course supposed to reflect Christ and show Christ-like behavior at all times. The principal of the winning school apparently felt that the team did not in this extremely lopsided victory and made a formal apology to the other school. Their school after all had a winning team and the other one hadn't won a game in the last four seasons. The coach of the team felt the apology was in error and respectfully disagreed with it. Shortly after, he was fired. Just from this, it may seem that the coach was in the wrong and should have been fired, but from here it just gets interesting. The coach had apparently just a few years ago led this school from lopsided losses to their current winning team. Also, according to the players they did not try their best on purpose: missing shots, not taking some shots, and generally not playing hard once they racked up 25 points. From their testimony there was really not much more they could have done as the other coach wasn't giving up and it would be silly for the winning team to just up and call the game just because they were winning so badly. Maybe I'm wrong. Read the articles and let me know what you think.

[Original article \(mistitled- the principal was the apologetic one\)](#)

[Article about the coach being fired](#)

[Testimony from the coach and players](#)

Please vote, too. Voting is good. After all, voting is what finally removed our disgrace of a governor tonight:

[poll id="4"]

(Sorry for the misalignment of the question vs. the options. I don't know how to fix this, though I did try in the templates section)

And your job for this week is...

Most elementary classrooms share a common theme. Besides behavior boards, displayed classwork, televisions, etc. there are those boards that show who has what jobs for the week. I have seen job boards with only a few jobs listed and most students on deck for another week and I have seen job boards where every student in the room has a job. Once the common jobs like lunch basket, paper passer, mailman/messenger, and librarian are filled the teacher has to start getting creative with jobs like watering the plants, policing the floor, watching the clock (so the teacher doesn't go into that valuable recess time of course), massage the teacher, window... wait, what? Back up there- massage the teacher?? Okay, I admit I have not seen this one myself but apparently a Florida third-grade teacher had this job on her board. I say *had* as not only does the job not exist anymore in that classroom but neither does the teacher. Needless to say, when the parents found out about this one some were quite upset. Fifty years ago everyone might have just gotten a laugh out of it but in today's climate of teachers, erm, getting just a bit *too close* to their students (and going to prison for it) it is understandable that parents wouldn't like this. The article makes it clear there was nothing like that sort of hanky-panky going on, but the district decided to let the teacher go for her inappropriateness. Well, we can all guess that's why she was fired- the school just said it was a "personnel matter." Anyway, read the article here:

[Teacher Fired After Asking Her Students For Massages](#)

PS. I am now waiting for this sort of job to show up in the

classrooms I sub in- would be nice...

Bureaucracy at its finest...

I have read some pretty scary stories of how politically correct and bureaucratic the UK has become. A recent story had some Muslims completely outraged at an advertisement for the police because it had a dog in it, which is considered unclean to them. The proper response would have been something to the effect of "don't be ridiculous- it's just a dog." Instead the police apologized and said they would offer an alternative. I guess it's not surprising as the PC climate there is such that, if I heard correctly, the police aren't even allowed to carry a gun with them- they must keep them in the trunks of their cars.

Anyway, the story I'm posting about leaves me shaking my head at where this world is going. This couple has a teenage son who is epileptic (and has cerebral palsy) and often travels to school by means of a taxi. Only mom and dad know how to use some special equipment they have if the boy goes into a seizure. When driving their son to school, there is absolutely no problem whatsoever. However, he usually has to take a cab due to the car not being available. Mom has to go with him in case he has a fit, but get this, she isn't allowed to because *she hasn't had a Criminal Records Bureau check*. Say what? She's the mom! Apparently since the cab is provided for them, they have to follow the rules precisely- being mom doesn't get her a waiver. How ridiculous is that? Of course, she's going through the process, but really, why should she have to? Anyway, here's the link to the story:

[Mother stopped from travelling with son in taxi to school](#)

Oops...

First school news post in a while. ☐ Apparently a top-rated school district was trying to share the good news in a press conference. I stress *trying* as most people watching could only focus on the ironically misspelled sign in the background. Spellchecker, anyone? ☐ Click the picture for the story.



Hiatus?

My life is so uninteresting I am seriously considering a hiatus right now. I am a bit depressed that there is such little interest in my blog. True, I don't exactly advertise it outside of a link in my signature at a site I don't post much at, but I would have thought some would post here outside of the three regulars (and one irregular). I am also disappointed in myself at not going after a new job. Subbing has barely paid the bills, and now I am one month into no income. At one time I had hoped to supplement subbing with some sort of computer-based business like an ebook or computer repair, but it's looking like that end is not only dead but rotting away...

Maybe I can think of something to post every now and then, or maybe something will happen that will give me something to post about, but until then it doesn't look good for this blog. However, I know my mood is down right now so I won't

make any decisions until it improves.

I know I used to post school news, but all I have really read in the last few months was so-and-so teacher has improper relations with his or her students and so-and-so gets in trouble for showing their Christianity. In other words, nothing worth posting, at least here. This kind of stuff is just too common and too sickening. Maybe retrogaming news? There was a new release of [Gamebase Amiga](#) recently. Get this package, [WinUAE](#), and a few Kickstart ROMS and you're all set to go with playing old amiga games. Another package for Amiga if you want to do more than play games is [AmigaSys 4](#).

So, until later.

EDIT: Hm, this new post seems to have broken the embedded video from Friday. Even though no one showed any interest in it anyway here's the direct link: [I Pledge Allegiance to the Lamb](#)

EDIT 2: Video looks to be working again.

Moving day

Hey, watch out- will ya? Get that house outa' the middle of the road! Er- house? In the road? It must be Mount Prospect's Central School. Today was the day they moved the 1896 schoolhouse to its new location by the Mount Prospect Historical Society. This building was saved recently when funds were raised to move it from its old location, where it would have been torn down to make way for progress. Unfortunately, the schoolhouse still has to wait for the new foundation to set. Once it does, they will have to lift it again off it's temporary spot and plop it down where it will

hopefully stay for awhile. Next, they will need to raise some money to renovate it and finally will hopefully open it for tours (just a guess), at a reasonable cost of course. You can find the story by clicking the picture below. Oh, I hope the driver didn't speed with his 105,000 pound load..



Another story link is: [Mount Prospect Historical Society moves Central School](#)