Doing the DPI Dance

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It can be difficult to predict when and why particular technologies will attract attention from policymakers. A few years ago, it seemed like around every policy corner — whether it be privacy, Internet neutrality, copyright enforcement, or cybersecurity — lurked deep packet inspection, a technical capability that allowed ISPs to gain increased visibility into the traffic crossing their networks.

Around that time, I embarked on an effort to contribute a chapter to an interdisciplinary privacy volume, assessing how the privacy impact of DPI varies depending on the context and attempting to outline a practical definition of DPI. Academic publishing schedules being what they are, the chapter has just been published as part of Privacy in America: Interdisciplinary Perspectives [2], a work assiduously edited and assembled by Bill Aspray and Phil Doty out of the U. of Texas School of Information.

A pre-print of the chapter, entitled “Doing the DPI Dance: Assessing the Privacy Impact of Deep Packet Inspection,” is available here [3], as are the key arguments from the chapter summarized in poster form. [4]

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