

Editorial

Military actions by North Korea are condemnable

North Korea needs to calm down. Unprovoked acts of war are something blatantly condemned by most countries of the world. There are fancy buildings in places like New York and Geneva and historic pieces of paper inked with pinky-promises from world leaders explicitly saying so. You'd be right to point out the hypocrisy of our recent monkeyshines in the Middle East — Desert Storm — waging war to contest the notion that one specific country was allowed to unilaterally invade another country without asking Mom and Dad for permission, and the sequel proving that if you're the United States of America, you could. Even twice.

North Korea's actions may have been viewed as shooting spitballs on the global stage, but they were indeed sheer acts of war. In the face of civilian deaths, kudos in spades is what the South Koreans deserve after their extraordinary display of restraint.

It seems as though Kim Jong Il is besieged by a few tired generals eager to send the regime out in a final blaze of glory, a troubling development in a country that is in the learning stages of tinkering with nuclear weaponry.

The reality of certain regimes cooperating with North Korea in their endeavor is no Bond plot incarnate, but an increasingly likely, dangerous possibility.

We're happy for the candor of our Wiki-leaked embassy documents, if only for the language from upper brass Chinese condemning their communist compatriots as spoiled children. We're glad to hear it amid the theatrics regarding agreements to play nice with the Ruskies in the currency game.

Nuclear aspirations in an unstable country shouldn't be taken lightly, and we sincerely hope the Chinese are able to shore up the problem and precedent of North Korean hostility.

The aforementioned leaked cables have already been pored over by our heroes at the New York Times, and it's worth noting that South Korean intelligence says United States presence above the DMZ is "unwelcome" at best. We're glad to hear that a regime run by a man who golfs perfect games and has no bowel movements is in its last days.

In May, an international committee found North Korea was to blame for the sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan this year, two unanswered acts of war by our count, and 46 lives lost.

We've joined our Korean compatriots in what's been called "Gunboat Diplomacy," the "it" term for the exercises along with the United States and the carrier group of the USS George Washington.

China isn't sovereign over the entirety of the Yellow Sea, but has voiced its distaste for U.S. presence in the area on more than one occasion. They've gone so far as to harass surveillance ships and international vessels, and are most likely less than impressed with our current endeavors.

South Korean President Lee Myung-bak apologized today for "failing to protect his people" — somber words from a heavy heart. In the face of possible all-out war, South Korea has only gone so far as to promise that it will retaliate against further acts of aggression from its northern neighbor. While the 698,000 troops of the South Korean military can undoubtedly hold their own, it's our sincerest hope that we've seen the extent of hostilities.

Three wars is three too many.

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Computers

Webs we've woven



By Rick Hanton @iowastatedaily.com

Remember, technology may be far more fragile than we tend to think

As you go about your daily life, texting your friends, checking e-mail online, and Googling a question on your phone as you eat lunch, you may not stop to think about how much you depend on technology these days. Those marvelously advanced devices are great, but some of the technology underlying the devices occasionally treads on shaky ground because it was not originally designed with hundreds of millions of users in mind.

You may not realize that the Internet itself is running out of address numbers — those street signs that tell your computer where to go to find the data on your favorite website. If you didn't know, when you type an address like www.google.com into your Web browser, that Web address is translated into a 32-bit address of the server where the Google website is located (Google.com = 74.125.95.105 from Parks Library as of this writing). The only problem is that with this 32-bit size, the Internet can only have 2^{32} or 4.295 billion unique web IP addresses.

While you may believe that 4 billion is a large number, with the number of web-enabled smart phones, televisions and cars being produced today — each with a unique IP address — the addresses should be completely exhausted next year. You can follow IPv4Countdown on Twitter or an iPhone/Android app that counts down to the "IP Doomsday"

if you want to know precisely when we will run out.

So what happens then? Do we not allow more users to access the Internet? That would be disappointing and may cause global economic problems. Instead, the researchers and companies that maintain the Internet developed a new address system called IPv6 — the current system is called IPv4 — with larger 128-bit addresses, allowing for 340 undecillion (3.4×10^{38}) unique Web addresses.

For reference, that number is approximately 1.5 times the number of stars thought to exist in the universe, and should be enough addresses for the Internet until long after we are all gone.

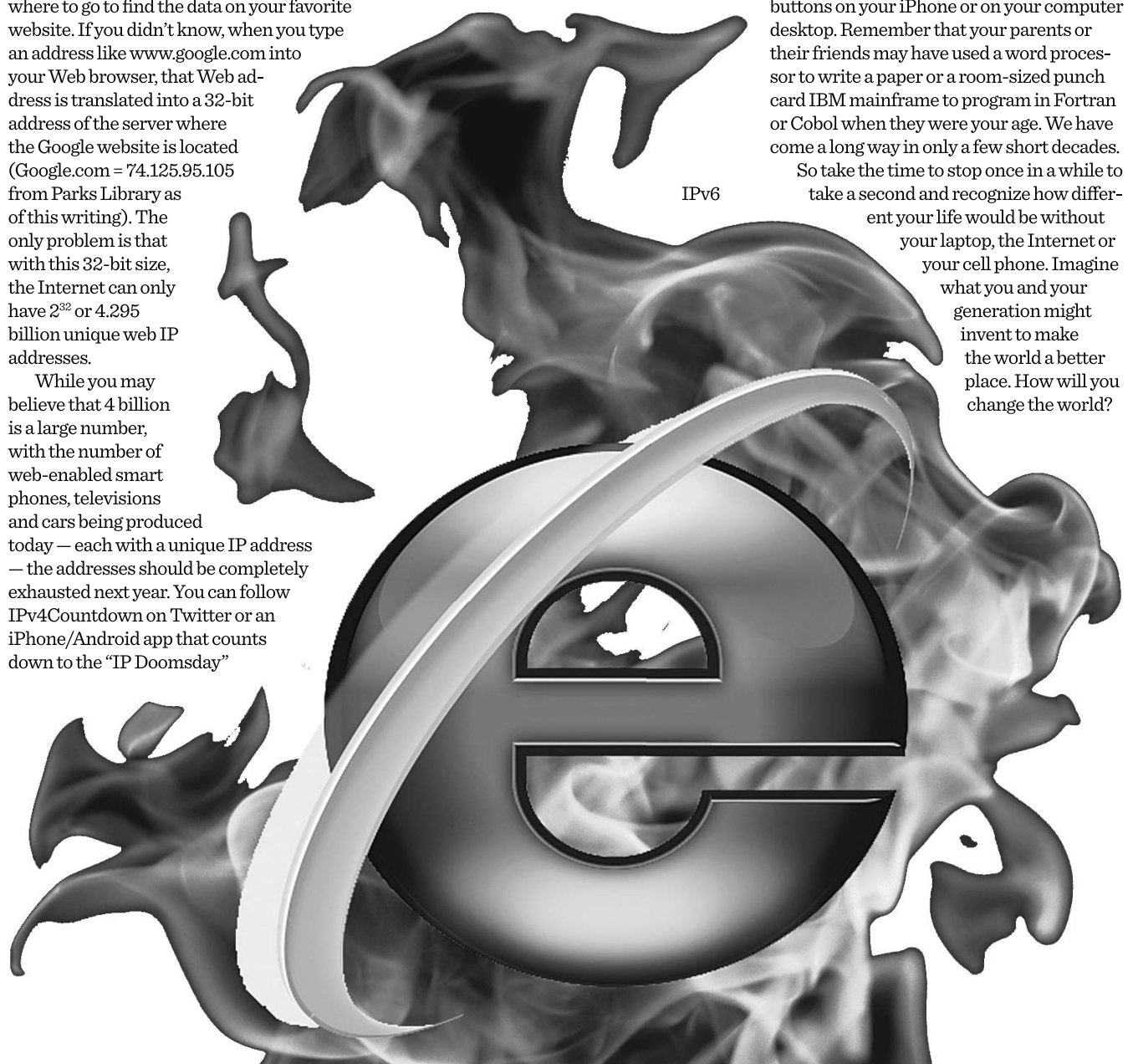
There is just one problem — the two systems are not designed to be compatible. So while most computers can use

can be easily upgraded to use it, most computers in the Western world don't use it yet — the "Western world" because as creators of the Internet, the United States was allocated a much larger proportion of the total stock of IP addresses than others.

So expect a subtle and possibly imperceptible shift inside your Internet devices in the next two years as new devices begin to use the new IPv6 system. If all goes to plan, the change should be gradual and easy, but there will surely be hiccups. The situation has been likened in a way to the Y2K bug a few years ago, but it is different because it is less time-constrained while present on a larger scale.

Why did I explain this issue that is normally too technical for most to understand or care about? I wanted to remind you of the levels of complexity underneath the simple buttons on your iPhone or on your computer desktop. Remember that your parents or their friends may have used a word processor to write a paper or a room-sized punch card IBM mainframe to program in Fortran or Cobol when they were your age. We have come a long way in only a few short decades.

So take the time to stop once in a while to take a second and recognize how different your life would be without your laptop, the Internet or your cell phone. Imagine what you and your generation might invent to make the world a better place. How will you change the world?



Graphic: Rebekka Brown/Iowa State Daily

Scheduling

Does Thanksgiving Break need to be overhauled?



By Curtis Powers @iowastatedaily.com

Coming back from Thanksgiving Break is a little weird. Think about it. We have two weeks and finals; that's it. Then we have another break for three weeks. In contrast, Spring Break will fall in the middle of the semester.

As I've mentioned before, it might make more sense to break up the days off. Sure, it's easier to just do it all in one week. After all, that's probably the way it's always been done.

However, doing it the way we're doing is kind of like the way Iowa State's football schedule is: No bye weeks, and that takes a toll over the course of a season. Sure, you can grind it out, but your performance suffers.

Take me for example. My GPA during my four fall semesters averaged out at 2.91 with a range of 2.75 to 3.00. For the four spring semesters, my GPA averaged out at 3.28 with a range of 3.00 to 3.53.

As any person who's taken a stat class knows, correlation doesn't imply causation. There are other variables at work beyond when breaks occur.

I will freely admit that my first fall semester was in engineering before I transferred to accounting (2.83). My last fall semester was also the first semester in which I was married and my last one as an undergraduate (2.75).

Even at that, there are still two semesters where I didn't crack above a 3.00 — both were 3.00. And aside from my one 3.00 during the spring of 2008, my other three semesters were 3.27, 3.33 and 3.53.

And as a graduate student in political science in spring 2010, I notched a 4.00. I can't remember the last time I did that. Elementary school? It wasn't easy either. I had to write a 20-page research paper basically figuring things out as I went since I hadn't written a paper more than five pages before in my life.

Furthermore, I decided to take an internship during the fall semester as an undergraduate because I didn't like that semester very much. I still had a fourth fall semester, but it did make one of them less relevant because I was accepted to graduate school before graduation.

But so far, I've just looked at my experience, and I'm certainly not a representative sample of the university population. So I would need more data and analysis to make more substantive claims.

However, I just can't shake the feeling that something could be there; this article wasn't even going to be about this topic.

I was walking the fifth floor hallway of Ross Hall at around midnight trying to come up with a topic. I decided to write about the need to plan out your semester and not overburden yourself with too many things. That way you can actually enjoy college.

But as I started to write, this came out. It's weird. I'm not one to crusade for things, generally speaking — if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

The more I thought about it, though, it seemed that there may be a better way. Maybe it's due to the policy and program evaluation course I'm taking. It's taught me to think about what a program's actually trying to do and why as a result of policy. Once you can figure that out, you can find ways to improve the program and make it work better.

That got me thinking. How could Iowa State improve the break in fall semester? Initially I just wished that our Thanksgiving was actually the fourth Thursday in October, but obviously that's not reality.

I also think every college in the United States takes a break in some fashion for Thanksgiving. However, some of them don't break on the Monday and Tuesday of that

week.

So you could take a Monday and Tuesday off earlier in the semester. That would help break things up a bit without sacrificing time in the classroom.

The dates I liked the most were the second Monday and Tuesday of October. The second Monday in October is actually when Canada's Thanksgiving is so it'd kind of be like having two Thanksgivings.

It's also Columbus Day, which is probably problematic for some folks, but I couldn't find a better solution. I tried to find important dates to celebrate famous ISU people like Carrie Catt and George W. Carver, but I came up empty.

More importantly, those dates would fall in the eighth week of the semester, which is about when we break in the spring. In my mind, this is pivotal because the goal is to put a break closer to the middle of the semester.

While this plan isn't perfect, I think it would be doable especially considering almost 90 percent of American ISU undergraduates live in Iowa or states that border Iowa.

So, in all likelihood, a change in policy probably wouldn't affect too many students' ability to go home during Thanksgiving Break.

But this whole point is moot unless some of you think this policy needs improvement. So what do you think? Do you think this matters? Does the break policy for fall semester need to be changed?

E-mail me and let me know. Vote in our poll at the Iowa State Daily website. If you do think it's important, e-mail your representative for Government of the Student Body. Contrary to popular belief, the GSB does stuff, and something like this might be right up their alley.

Make your voice heard.