Tech.

Spy on the spy; creep on the creeper

Find out who is creeping on the weird websites you visit, with Lightbeam for Firefox 1.0.2

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A Firefox plugin called "Lightbeam" is available for download. This plugin allows internet users to see which companies are tracking their internet use.

Mozilla (the open-source internet community from which Firefox originated) believes that the functionings of the inner workings of the internet need to be exposed to the average user.

The developments of plugins like this are a response to the growing public concerns about internet snooping. Notably, are the recent leaks of the NSA massive spying programs, disclosed by Edward Snowden.

Snowden is a former CIA employee and computer specialist who leaked a large amount of sensitive data to the media, concerning metadata, the PRISM project, Xkeyscore, and Tempora internet surveillance programs.

Dianne Cataldo, a Masters English student at Lakehead, said, "What scares me the most is people finding out specific information about you, like your location [and where you live], and then using or selling that information to third-party companies."

The Lightbeam plugin provides users with a visual demonstration of the tracking which occurs on the internet. Over a 24-hour span, users are able to see how their time on the internet is monitored by companies.

Mozilla claims that IP addresses are kept private, and that the information collected via the plugin remains only on the computer of the user. However, if the user would like to contribute to the Lighbeam project, they can choose to share their information with the company.

According to *Mozilla.org*, "As you browse, Lightbeam reveals the full depth of the web today, including parts that are not transparent to the average user. Using three distinct interactive graphic representations—Graph, Clock, and List—Lightbeam enables you to examine individual third parties over time and space, to identify where they connect to your online activity, and to engage with this unique view of the web."