

Your boss can sever your [Linkedin](#) connections, and make them his own. Are you reading this at work? Perhaps you just checked your LinkedIn account for messages, invitations and business opportunities? And surely you keep in touch with social friends, some family and old school buds on LinkedIn, too? Well, quit your job or get fired, and you may just lose access to that account.

Linda Eagle lost access to her account for over 20 weeks, and she was angry enough to sue her employer for the lost opportunities to "connect," and network. She figured it was worth at least \$100,000 in damages.

The judge did not agree.

On October 4, 2012, [Judge Ronald Buckwalter](#), of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, issued a [memorandum opinion granting summary judgment](#) against Ms. Eagle. The court found her damage claim to be speculative. After all, how do we quantify the value of our vast LinkedIn networks?

Personally, it's mostly been worth a few Orioles game tickets and pleasant lunches. How much time did Ms. Eagle spend on the site, I wonder, to make it worth \$100,000? And with whom did she connect, Mr. Trump?



But it's not the tenuous nature of her lawsuit that captured my attention--and it is pretty close to frivolous, to me--it's the statement by the court about the employer's practices. Buried in the opinion is the rather bland recitation that it was corporate policy to encourage individual employees to create on-line accounts, but to then take over the account upon the employee's separation.

So, as you check in on LinkedIn and other websites from your office chair, ask your self whether it is truly your account, or your employers? Is it in your policy manual? Has your employer required disclosure of your passwords? Who owns the content of your profile, anyway?

Food for thought.

You can find my LinkedIn profile, [here](#). Let's do lunch.