

Cyber Crime

E-commerce, e-learning but e-terrorism?

What with media scaremongering, crusading politicians and global paranoia concerning the capabilities of Osama bin Laden and his al Quaeda network, it is hardly surprising that a new wave of terrorism has recently hit the headlines.

The idea of terrorists hacking into systems to gain access to specific targets is an old concept. However the Western world is now under threat from a new form of 'e-terrorism' according to experts in the USA. A 'worrying' new report suggests that terrorists could target important internet hubs with explosives, potentially bringing down large portions of the web.

Tony Grubestic and Morton O'Kelly, researchers at Ohio State University, simulated the effect of closing down 14 major internet nodes, and studied the effect on the rest of the network. They found that whilst larger cities would generally retain their access, smaller cities and towns could be completely disconnected. Considering the degree to which Western communities now rely on the internet, the potential for terrorists to exploit the confusion this would cause is huge.

However O'Kelly goes on to say that the likelihood of anybody actually being able to destroy the key nodes is 'extremely small'. As is the chance of Osama recording a single with Westlife, targeting the Christmas market and gaining maximum exposure to a new audience.

It seems that researchers are more concerned with generating alarming headlines than investigating the very real cyber crimes that occur on a daily basis. Is this wild speculation really more important than controlling on-line paedophile rings? Or credit card fraud? The 223 companies who lost a staggering \$455.8 million in losses attributable to cyber crime in 2002 would probably say no.

The European Union wants to throw the book at cyber criminals and is giving its member nations 20 months to get everything in order to accommodate the necessary changes. Perhaps it would be a better idea to concentrate on fighting the very real threat of cyber crime rather than creating improbable theories about cyber terrorism.

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A: Discuss the questions below in pairs:

- 1) How do you feel when the subject of terrorism comes into conversation?
- 2) To what extent does the media in your country exaggerate?
- 3) How much does e-terrorism worry you?
- 4) Which cyber crimes do you feel should be urgently addressed?

B: Here are four cases of cyber crimes. Read the information below. As you read, consider the following questions:

- Which has the greatest impact on society?
- What punishment fits the crime?
- Which is the most widespread in your country?

1)

Child pornography is a global problem. Finding the suspects and the machines they are using to distribute child pornography is often the easiest part. It is difficult to track down the suspect's physical identity. The job of the police is to seize the computer and prove that the suspect deliberately surfed to illegal pornography and stored it.

2)

Identity theft – the practice of credit card fraud – topped a list compiled by the Federal Trade Commission, accounting for 43 percent of the 380,000 complaints logged by the agency and other consumer-protection organisations.

3)

Hacking into databases can cause chaos for people with internet bank accounts, credit accounts or utility billing. By the time an initial breach has been spotted, money may have already been debited from an account.

4)

Datasec, an English company which assists the police in dealing with cyber crime, is increasingly being used by corporate clients to combat e-mail fraud. Complaints range from misuse of company internet and e-mail facilities to leaking of confidential information and interception of e-mail from board members.

C: Discussion Box:

The British Government has been accused of internet snooping by a lobby group, Privacy International. Police and other officers are allegedly making around a million requests for access to data each year. Despite this, the government is keen to extend the number of public authorities with access to such information. Lawyers suggest that this contradicts the European Human Rights Act which states that there must be a good reason to interfere with personal data.

D: Prepare a mini-presentation to show how you would implement a cyber crime policy in your country.

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Teacher's Notes

Summary: To provide Ss with the opportunity to read and understand a complex text in English; to prepare a mini-presentation

Procedure:

- 1) Show Ss transparency with words lifted from the text for one minute (see supplementary materials). Remove the transparency and ask the Ss to write down all the words they can remember. Then ask Ss to work in pairs and predict what they think the text will be about.
- 2) Hold short feedback session.
- 3) Ask Ss to read the text.
- 4) Ss re-read the text and mark any unknown vocabulary using the following code: red for unknown words, green for unfamiliar words. Ss then regroup (pairs or small groups) and ask them to compare and discuss their lists.
- 5) Hold short feedback session.
- 6) Give out worksheet and refer Ss to questions in section A. Ss discuss. T circulates and prompts discussion.
- 7) Refer Ss to instructions for section B. Ss read the four cases of cyber crime whilst considering the questions raised.
Note: different crimes affect different sections of society – an issue which the teacher can raise
- 8) Discussion Box – an interesting issue of privacy which may stimulate discussion. To be used at the teacher's discretion and related to Ss country of residence
- 9) Homework – prepare a mini-presentation

Supplementary text: The supplementary text is an authentic letter that can be used to provoke discussion ie why do people write such letters? What sort of person would write such letters? Who would fall for schemes such as these?

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Supplementary material for OHT

terrorism
speculation
hacking
threat
exploit
confusion
alarming

cyber crime
global paranoia
headlines
explosives
researchers
destroy
experts

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Supplementary Text

From: (Name Deleted) Sent: 15 March 2002 06:33 To: (Name Deleted)
Subject: Urgent Management (Address Deleted) (Name Deleted) (URGENT AND CONFIDENTIAL)
(RE: TRANSFER OF (\$ 152,000.000.00 USD ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY TWO MILLION DOLLARS

Dear Sir,

We want to transfer to overseas (\$ 152,000.000.00 USD) One hundred and Fifty two million United States Dollars) from a Prime Bank in Africa, I want to ask you to quietly look for a reliable and honest person who will be capable and fit to provide either an existing bank account or to set up a new Bank a/c immediately to receive this money, even an empty a/c can serve to receive this money, as long as you will remain honest to me till the end for this important business trusting in you and believing in God that you will never let me down either now or in future.

I am Mr (Name Deleted), the Auditor General of prime banks, during the course of our auditing I discovered a floating fund in an account opened in the bank in 1990 and since 1993 nobody has operated on this account again, after going through some old files in the records I discovered that the owner of the account died without a [heir] hence the money is floating and if I do not remit this money out urgently it will be forfeited for nothing. the owner of this account is Mr (Name Deleted), a foreigner, and an industrialist, and he died, since 1993. and no other person knows about this account or any thing concerning it, the account has no other beneficiary and my investigation proved to me as well that Mr (Name Deleted) until his death was the manager of (Name Deleted).

We will start the first transfer with fifty two million [\$52,000.000] upon successful transaction without any disappoint from your side, we shall re-apply for the payment of the remaining rest amount to your account, The amount involved is (USD 152M) One hundred and Fifty two million United States Dollars, only I want to first transfer \$52,000.000 [fifty two million United States Dollar from this money into a safe foreigners account abroad before the rest, but I don't know any foreigner, I am only contacting you as a foreigner because this money can not be approved to a local person here, without valid international foreign passport, but can only be approved to any foreigner with valid international passport or drivers license and foreign a/c because the money is in us dollars and the former owner of the a/c Mr (Name Deleted) is a foreigner too, [and the money can only be approved into a foreign a/c

However, we will sign a binding agreement, to bind us together. I got your contact address from the girl who operates computer, I am revealing this to you with believe in God that you will never let me down in this business, you are the first and the only person that I am contacting for this business, so please reply urgently so that I will inform you the next step to take urgently. Send also your private telephone and fax number including the full details of the account to be used for the deposit. I want us to meet face to face to build confidence and to sign a binding agreement that will bind us together before transferring the money to any account of your choice where the fund will be safe. Before we fly to your country for withdrawal, sharing and investments.

I need your full co-operation to make this work fine. because the management is ready to approve this payment to any foreigner who has correct information of this account, which I will give to you, upon your positive response and once I am convinced that you are capable and will meet up with instruction of a key bank official who is deeply involved with me in this business. I need your strong assurance that you will never, never let me down. With my influence and the position of the bank official we can transfer this money to any foreigner's reliable account which you can provide with assurance that this money will be intact pending our physical arrival in your country for sharing. The bank official will destroy all documents of transaction immediately we receive this money leaving no trace to any place and to build confidence you can come immediately to discuss with me face to face after which I will make this remittance in your presence and three of us will fly to your country at least two days ahead of the money going into the account.

I will apply for annual leave to get visa immediately I hear from you that you are ready to act and receive this fund in your account. I will use my position and influence to obtain all legal approvals for onward transfer of this money to your account with appropriate clearance from the relevant ministries and foreign exchange departments. At the conclusion of this business, you will be given 35% of the total amount, 60% will be for me, while 5% will be for expenses both parties might have incurred during the process of transferring.

I look forward to your earliest reply through my privet email address (Deleted)

Yours truly, (Name Deleted)