

Virtual World Crime

Council of Europe
Octopus Interface Conference
March 2009



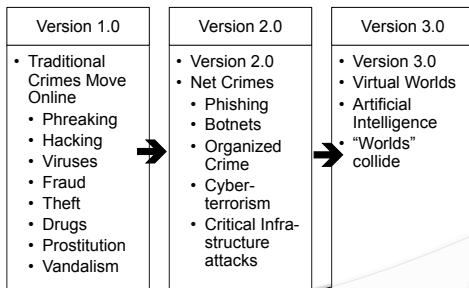
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Crime in a virtual world? Really?

- Background
- Interpol Working Party on IT Crime-Europe
- Does it exist?
- Should we be concerned?
- Get real!



Evolution of Cyber Crime: The Future is Now



Virtual Worlds



- A virtual world is a computer-based simulated environment intended for its users to inhabit and interact via avatars. These avatars (“av” or “avi”) are usually depicted as textual, two-dimensional, or three-dimensional graphical representations.
- Virtual worlds fulfill a fantasy roll—avatars can fly, change gender, pose as monsters and conquer new worlds.
- Also more mundane and common activities: Avatars, shop, run for political office, engage in diplomatic relations, have sexual relations, work as journalists and engage in criminal activities.

Virtual Worlds



- Among most popular is Second Life (SL)
- Since opening to the public in 2003, it has grown explosively and today is “inhabited” by 16 million avatars
- Own economy (Linden Dollars; Official Exchange Rates-250 Linden Dollars (L\$) to the US Dollar).
- In January 2008, residents spent 28,274,505 hours in their “metaverse”

Virtual Worlds



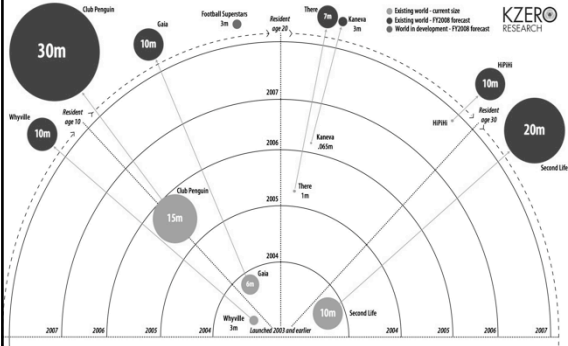
- These avatars live in worlds that are absolutely ‘real’ for participants (psychology of virtual worlds).
 - 20% of MMORPG gamers say that the virtual world is their primary place of residence.
 - The real world, a.k.a. meatspace, is just a place to get food and sleep. (*Mother Jones*)
- Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPG)—are videogames that allow thousands of players to introduce themselves into a virtual world in a simultaneous way, and interact among them.

Virtual Worlds

- Some are extremely popular regionally, for example "Active Worlds Universe" and "Cyworld" are used by 90% of South Koreans under the age of 20.
- "In world" populations: Second Life (with 16 million World of Warcraft (12 million paid subscribers) and Disney's Club Penguin expected to attain 30 million participants in 2009. Together the population of these three virtual worlds alone exceeds the real-world populations of Canada, Australia and Ireland combined.



Growth of Virtual Worlds



Life in a Virtual World: What can you do?



Attend U2 Concert



Buy a Coke



Take a Toyota for a Drive



Take Money from ATM

Life in a Virtual World:



Embassy "House" of Sweden



The Crimes:



Property Crimes: *given size of economy, not surprising*

- Theft
- Burglary
- Robbery
- Extortion/Gang Activity:
- Counterfeiting
- Tax Evasion
- Organised Crime

Vice Crimes

- ◉ Gambling
- ◉ Prostitution
- ◉ Legal Issues deeply unclear and remain unresolved
 - Invading real world- London couple divorces after wife discover husband "cheating" with another avatar



Crimes Against Persons

- ◉ Assault
- ◉ Kidnapping
- ◉ Domestic Violence
- ◉ Stalking

Crimes Against Persons

- ◉ Hate/Racist/Xenophobic/Religious Crimes



Crimes Against Persons

Child Pornography-Grooming/Sexual Aggressions

- *Age Play*: players request sex with 'child' avatars
- Has encouraged a growth in players posing as children in order to make money.
- Not all criminal
- Virtual Adoption
- Now under 18 banned from SL, but how to verify?
- German prosecutor investigated 'virtual child pornography and exploitation'



Crimes Against Persons

- Rape
 - In 2007, one avatar in Second Life, allegedly raped another.
 - Some Internet bloggers dismissed the simulated attack as nothing more than digital fiction.
 - But police in Belgium open investigation
 - Julian Dibbell. Famous case from late 1990's.



Crimes Against Persons

- Murder (of an avatar)
 - **Angry online divorcee 'kills' virtual ex-hubby**
 - **Police say woman logged on virtual reality game and ended ex's avatar**

By Mari Yamaguchi
Associated Press
updated: 10:46 a.m. ET Oct. 23, 2008

TOKYO - A 43-year-old Japanese piano teacher's sudden divorce from her online husband in a virtual game world made her so angry that she logged on and killed his digital persona, police said Thursday.

She used his identification and password to log onto popular interactive game "Maple Story" to carry out the virtual murder in mid-May, a police official in northern Sapporo City said on condition of anonymity, citing department policy.

"I was suddenly divorced, without a word of warning. That made me so angry," the official quoted her as telling investigators and admitting the allegations.

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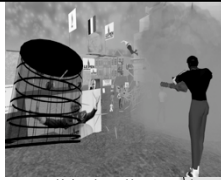
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Political Rally Attack



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Traditional Terrorists in Virtual Worlds

- In 2003, Hezbollah released a video game in which players were awarded medals for throwing grenades at images of Ariel Sharon.
- Head of the Australian government's High Tech Crime Centre, noted Jihadists using the virtual reality world to master skills such as reconnaissance and surveillance. **"We need to start thinking about living, working and protecting two worlds and two realities,"** he told a security industry conference in Sydney.
- The UK Serious Organised Crime Agency are also investigating Second Life as a means transferring money across borders in a way that is more difficult for the authorities to monitor.

Terrorists in Virtual Worlds-The new

- The Second Life Liberation Army (SLLA) was formed as the 'in-world' military wing of a national liberation movement within SL
- The movement demands that basic political and human rights should be established for avatars within SL immediately.
- As Linden Labs is functioning as an authoritarian government the only appropriate response is to fight.



Policing the Virtual World

- ◉ Nature abhors a vacuum
- ◉ Many vigilante and unofficial law enforcement groups online
- ◉ Second Life Police Department (SLPD)
 - currently about 30 to date

Policing the Virtual World: Real Police

- ◉ Vancouver Police (recruiting)



Policing the Virtual World: Real Police

- ◉ Italian Polizia di Stato Service Requests and Investigations



Policing the Virtual World: Real Police

- ◎ China Police/Ministry of Public Safety avatars added to websites for instant access to the police.



Policing the Virtual World

- ◎ Willingly or reluctantly?
- ◎ Laws are coming...be prepared.
- ◎ Governments beginning to regulate online behavior related to obscenity, fraud, and theft.
- ◎ European regulators are considering whether to impose real-world banking laws on virtual-world money.



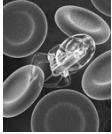
Making the Arrest

- ◎ How to track, cross world?
- ◎ Detention/Interview
 - Rights?
- ◎ Arrest/Jail
- ◎ Death Penalty?
- ◎ Prosecutors
- ◎ Judges
- ◎ Prison



The future?

- Integration of biology and silicon
- Nanotechnology
- Killer robots



The Metaverse vs. The Real World

- Computer controlled real weapons: liveshot.com



In conclusion...

- Interpol Virtual World Crime project group continues
- Establishing 24/7 points of contact in virtual worlds
- Welcome your participation and expertise...
- Thanks!
