

Research paper on looked at property crimes, larceny or theft, robbery and burgla...

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Virtual Crime: Identity Theft

Virtual crimes against persons are projected to increase at a faster rate over the next decade because of the significant expansion and use of personal computing and social networking sites. Crime becomes easier in the virtual world because people who would not ordinarily confront another person face to face will do so in the privacy and anonymity of the Internet. In many cases, victims may be affected in the same way as if it happened in their neighborhood in the real world. Virtual criminals, for the most part, are somewhat protected by anonymity because they do not leave solid physical evidence behind (Taylor, Fritsch, Liederbach, & Holt, 146).

Identity theft is currently the most prevalent of internet crimes occurring within America; averages of one million victims are reported each day (Taylor et al., 152). Social networking sites continue to grow at a rapidly fast pace, and individuals that access these sites voluntarily provide personal information about themselves, such as their full legal name, birthdate, address, and at times, even their social security numbers, which increases their likelihood of becoming victims of virtual crimes. In fact, virtual criminals no longer have to avidly search for victims because social networking sites provides them with a plethora of individuals. Many games and apps available through social networking sites actually share your personal information with affiliates, and therefore, individuals, once again, voluntary surrender their information to the digital world.

Many individuals become victims of virtual crimes simply because they are too naïve in believing that their personal information is safe from possible criminals. One of the most effective ways to deter cybercrime is to keep all

information private. Furthermore, research suggests that younger individuals are more likely to share their personal information, which might help account for why we are seeing an increase in victimization overall. Criminologists suggest that identity theft will continue to increase as people continue using credit and debit online, as well as online banking. Strict laws and penalties must be enforced in order to deter cyber thieves from committing these criminal acts (Taylor et al., 159).

References

Taylor, Robert, Eric Fritsch, John Liederbach, and Thomas Holt. Digital Crime and Digital Terrorism (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011. Print.