

Written Materials

Best Practices in a Worst Case Scenario: How to React Intelligently to a Security Breach

When your game, world, or network is hacked or otherwise intruded upon by malicious elements, what steps does the law compel you to take? When do you need to inform customers? What about law enforcement -- when do you need to bring the authorities into the situation? With each state having different standards, different statutes, and different penalties for non-compliance, it pays to know ahead of time how to react. This session will fortify digital entertainment operators with the information they need to protect their business, and their customers, when a breach occurs.

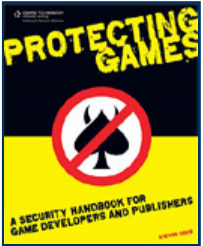
[Steven Davis, CEO, IT GlobalSecure Inc.](#)

[Benjamin T. Duranske, Attorney, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP](#)

Seven Figure Threats for Online Communities and Games

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Tuesday, August 25, 2009

Seven Figure Threats for Online Communities and Games

Where should you spend money for security? It is a fair question. Rather than starting with a bunch of crypto & firewalls, how about starting with what can cost you some serious loot?

Let's talk **Seven Figure Threats**.

For an online service (including online games), there are several Seven Figure Threats:

1. COPPA - This law intended to protect children from malicious marketing, mainly, is not a "choice" as some people think... it is a LAW. Companies that violate this law have seen fines of \$1 Million and it is the kind of thing attorneys general like it is pretty straightforward and is about protecting kids. It is also one that online services should actually like: if you comply with COPPA, you have a legal safe harbor against being prosecuted under COPPA.

2. (California) Data Disclosure - The California Data Disclosure law has been a real force in the US for getting companies to protect consumer data. The simple act of having to notify customers that their data has been disclosed is quite costly (... a stamp and a letter times a large number of letters is not cheap). Even worse, if credit card information is compromised, credit watches and reports need to be put in place. The cost of a loss of a single customer record was estimated to be \$202 in 2008, up from \$197 in 2007. These numbers can easily get into the millions for any reasonable sized business. 5000 names can cost your \$1 Million...

3. Payment Security - Fines for chargebacks can easily reach \$1 Million or more as Sony found recently. Online services can be particularly vulnerable to such theft as their is no physical delivery that can be disputed. Any problems with payments can cause increased fees, longer hold times, larger loss reserves, all of which can be expensive. There are direct and indirect elements of payment security... how does money work in your online service or game? is there a way to exploit or monetize the system (gold farming) to cash out?

Piracy is the next question, both for online games and traditional computer games. Pirate servers or private servers can easily cost substantial revenues as can the growing problem of account theft or sharing. The key is not the number of pirate copies or players, but the revenue lost, which is often much less. The generally low investment in anti-piracy technology (as opposed to vigorous anti-piracy rhetoric) tends to belie the industry's arguments about how much money they are losing (or how much they believe they can recover).

Cheating is also difficult to measure. It may have a larger financial impact to online services than piracy and there is certainly a "tipping point" effect where there is a level of cheating which can cause players to abandon a game and cease paying subscription fees or buying virtual items.

What is key is for security analysts to focus on costs and benefits. I use the "Seven Figure Threat" metric because it implies the opportunity for modest "Six Figure Solutions"... If you can use \$100,000 to \$300,000 to stop a \$1,000,000 problem, you should have no trouble selling your solution to management.

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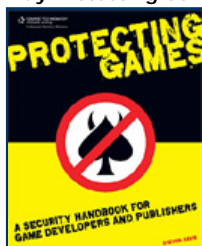
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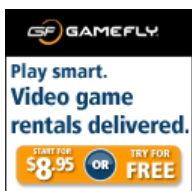
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Tuesday, August 4, 2009

Fighting Cheaters with Lawyers, the Sequel: Activision vs. Call of Duty Hackers

When in doubt, bring a lawsuit out. It looks like **Activision** is continuing **Blizzard's** strategy of using lawyers as its front line tactic against cheaters.

This time, its **Call of Duty 2** cheaters. These cheaters, who seem to be able to exploit the **console** version of the game (which is interesting in its own right).

Apparently, the attack is a case of a **save-game attack** (a topic I've discussed here as well as in **Chapter 14: App Attacks: State, Data, and Code Vulnerabilities and Countermeasures** of my book [Protecting Games](#)).

It would seem the attackers modify the game save files (or, perhaps, configuration files) to accelerate the cheater's weapons' rate of fire, increase ammunition ... the usual.

As a side note, this type of attack can be easily countered by technical measures, especially in a console environment.

(BIG I AM NOT A LAWYER DISCLAIMER)

Activision lawyers sent [take-down notices](#) to a number of web sites that host the software to facilitate this attack. The arguments are very similar to those that were used in the **World of Warcraft / Glider** case.

The claims are, once again, a bit dubious... even less so than in the Glider case since in this case, the cheating players are (apparently) simply altering save game (or configuration) files (not the game's in-memory state... the dubious argument used in the Glider case).

Players still need a legitimate copy of the game to use these cheats, so the arguments of copyright infringement doesn't seem credible and the DCMA argument raised again is also questionable.

The letter also claims the players are hacking the Xbox Live network which (once again) if this is a save-game hack, is not true... the players are "simply" altering a save-game file.

Activision has asked for the people running several sites that distribute these hacks to:

1. Cease & Desist distributing the hacks
2. Provide an accounting of revenue from selling the hack (I don't think this is the case, this time, I believe the hack is available for free... any further data?)
3. Provide names of the people or groups involved in creating or distributing the hack
4. Assign the domain names to Activision

The action has been effective (at least on its surface). All of the web sites are down: a [cached Google version](#) of the pages has the statement:

"Activision, contact me regarding the domain transfer. I will send you all of the EEP codes. XXXXXXXX@gmail.com or XXXXXXXXXX on AIM."

These types of cheats are usually widely available and often for free. It would not be surprising to be able to find these cheat tools available at other sites outside of the US and "easy" legal targeting by Activision.

The attacks themselves are interesting because they involve the **Xbox 360** version of the game. The console itself is relatively resistant to attack, but hackers have been able to attack game saves. When game save vulnerabilities are combined with some poor network architecture choices (usually involving using distributed state/object systems for networking). games on the console can be successfully attacked.

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As a matter of game design and engineering, this problem can be avoided... for much less expense than getting lawyers involved.

As a matter of public policy, the arguments put forward in this case seem questionable. This is cheating, not piracy, there is no copyright infringement and the arguments that were used in the WOW Glider case should not apply to game saves (even if one accepts their use for game utilities like glider). There is no network hacking (at least as described) to support those arguments... and, again, the cheating player is a legitimate licensee of the game ... at worst, they are in violation of the EULA.

As a long term strategy for fighting cheaters (or pirates), lawsuits are probably not the answer. Serious cheaters or pirates are going to locate their servers in jurisdictions that are not amenable to these sorts of actions. **BnetD**, a hacked version of Blizzard's **Battle.Net**, is easily found for download outside the US.

J. Andrews (2009), "[Activision Search & Destroy biggest online CoD Hackers](#)", <http://www.xboxic.com/news/5530>

via

Faheem (2009), "[Activision Says @\\$% Cheaters](#)", <http://www.lazygamer.co.za/xbox-360/activision-says-cheaters>

Activision via Xboxic.com (2009), "[Unauthorized Infringement of Activision Intellectual Property](#)", <http://files.xboxic.com/xbox-360/call-of-duty-4-modern-warfare/iwin.jpg>

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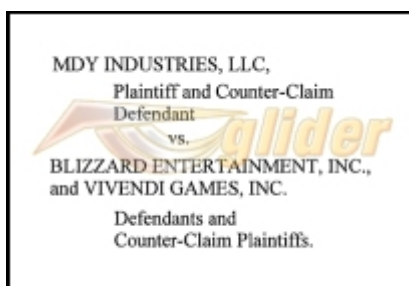
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MDY Industries has agreed to pay World of Warcraft creator Blizzard \$6,000,000 in damages arising from the use of MDY's [game bots](#) in World of Warcraft, pending appeal. The court formalized this agreement with an [Order and Stipulated Judgment](#) (.pdf). Blizzard [prevailed on several key issues at summary judgment](#) earlier this year, setting up this stipulation regarding damages. Had MDY lost on its damages arguments at trial, MDY could have conceivably ended up owing Blizzard several times this amount.

This judgment does not entirely conclude the matter. Issues still slated for trial in January include whether MDY's sales of Glider violated the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and whether MDY's owner Michael Donnelly can be held personally liable for the \$6,000,000 judgment.

Beyond trial, of course, there will almost certainly be an appeal to the 9th Circuit on the issue of liability, which would negate the stipulation, and thus the \$6m damages judgment, if MDY prevails.

MDY did not formally concede that Blizzard would have prevailed at trial on all triable issues, but did agree "that given the likelihood that some amount of damages would be awarded, a stipulated judgment for the amount of damages to which Blizzard is entitled to recover [...] is an appropriate method to resolve the issue of damages."

For the background of this suit, see *VB's complete coverage of MDY v. Blizzard*. Very briefly, Glider is a program that users run along with World of Warcraft. It automates key tasks in World of Warcraft, making it possible to play the game essentially unattended. Glider users can thus both harvest resources and generate high level characters without actually playing. Blizzard claimed that Glider violates Blizzard's copyright when Glider copies World of Warcraft into the computer's memory as part of its loading sequence, and prevailed on that claim, among others, earlier this year when the judge decided these issues at summary judgment. The issue of damages was to be tried in January, but this stipulated \$6m judgment takes that issue off the table.

From the order:

1. Blizzard shall be entitled to recover the total sum of \$6,000,000 as monetary damages for counts I, II and III of its Counterclaims and Third Party Complaint related to the sale of Glider up through and including September 1, 2008.
2. Blizzard shall not be entitled to double or triple recovery for counts I, II and III. That is, Blizzard shall be entitled to receive a total of \$6,000,000 in damages for counts I, II and III. However, should liability on any one or two of the counts be reversed on appeal, any one of these counts independently supports the \$6,000,000 award.
3. In the event that the Court determines that Michael Donnelly is personally liable, either individually or jointly and severally, under counts I, II, or III, this stipulation shall extend to him.
4. The parties shall submit their disputed and undisputed statements of facts and law related to the DMCA claim on September 10, 2008.
5. Counts V and VII of Blizzard's Counterclaims and Third Party Complaint alleging trademark infringement and unjust enrichment are hereby dismissed by stipulation of the parties.

Trial on the remaining issues is scheduled for January 8, 2009.

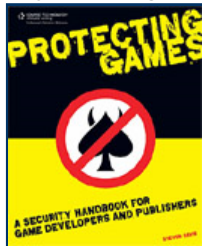
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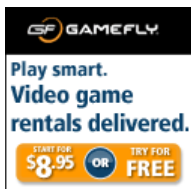
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Wednesday, August 19, 2009

The Gold Farmer War: Eve Online Edition

CCP Games has come out of the closet about its war on **gold farmers** in its science fiction MMO **Eve Online**.

... before I say anything else, this is an excellent service to the game industry and it is great that CCP Games has joined **Square Enix** in a fairly open discussion of what they are (and have) done in their struggle with gold farming.

Thank you CCP Games!!

In short, on June 22, 2009, CCP Games banned around 6200 accounts for gold farming (out of over 300,000 total subscribers or 2 percent... which seems pretty low). Conceptually costing themselves almost \$100,000 a month in revenues.

I do believe that these are lost revenues since, if the gold farmers were using fraudulent credit cards, the accounts would presumably be banned as soon as the fraudster is identified.

Ban counts don't include "gold frauders" / credit card criminals (or at least, they shouldn't).

Using the graphs at [MMOBux](#), the average price of Eve's currency, ISK, jumped in the wake of the bans - from around \$5 to \$8 per 200,000,000 ISK. The prices have continued to climb to \$12 which would indicate a drop in supply EXCEPT there was a much bigger drop in late May 2009.. it looks like ISK is now back where it was in the May time frame (additional info from knowledgeable folks in this area would be welcome).

The charts that CCP provides claim a reduction in ISK trading volume of 10 percent. It may be that the amount of ISK traded has dropped, but it looks like, after a brief downward spike, the number of transactions per day is back where it was (or fairly close). Eve's rich economic system is probably the most robust anti-RMT technique that they have. It would be interesting to compare total "gold farming dollars per month per subscriber" between the different games. My guess is that Eve is on the low side in this regard.

Gold farmers are apparently very CPU intensive for Eve (no data is provided on bandwidth). This number has been trending downward either due to the addition of processors (my guess) or improved efficiency.

Ingunn

Ingunn was apparently a real hub of gold farmer activity and a large number of accounts were banned in that system. Average player population dropped from around 130 concurrent players to closer to 10 or 20. Most likely, this is because of the efficiency of playing in that system for resource extraction. A more interesting question is why was the system such a hub of gold farmer activity?

QUESTION: Could CCP Games have fought gold farmers more simply by reducing the "security level" of the system and making it more of a target for PvP play?

PLEX

This is the latest tactic in CCP Games' "anti-RMT" campaign. The most notable element is PLEX, a legal, in-game version of RMT that allows players to trade game currency for game time (the dual currency system which **Matt Mihaly** has used and advocated). PLEX effectively creates a "ceiling" price for game currency... but, at some level, does cost CCP Games money as players can avoid paying subscription dollars by earning sufficient currency... if 1200 PLEX licences are sold each day, then the cost is 1200*30*15 just over \$540,000 per month (I'm guessing on redemption rates, obviously, based on the claim by CCP Games that trading volume has stabilized).

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***full disclosure, I work for VASCO and my opinions do not represent the company, but mor e my on personal beliefs [...]

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It is tricky to determine whether this has driven the price of the game's currency down or reduced gold farmer revenues in any meaningful way.

(it would be interesting to look at "one way transfers"/ gifts of currency and item volume over time)

Gold Farmers vs. Credit Card Fraudsters

CCP Games discussion of gold farming combines credit card fraudsters with gold farmers. I don't believe that this is factually correct and is done for rhetorical purposes to tar gold farmers with the same brush as actual credit card criminals (they are not the only company to have done so).

It will be interesting to see if CCP has succeeded in reducing its gold farmer problem or simply replaced it with the "gold frauder" problem found in other games. While gold farmers violate the game's Terms of Service and cost in terms of customer support, gold frauders can pose a much more direct threat to the health of a game by increasing credit card fees and fines. CCP Games seems to have done nothing to reduce demand for ISK. If it is no longer economically viable for gold farmers to succeed, will Gold Fraudsters step up?

J. Egan, "[EVE Online's anti RMT operation Unholy Rage bans over 6200 accounts](#)", <http://www.massively.com/2009/08/17/eve-onlines-anti-rmt-operation-unholy-rage-bans-over-6200-accou/>

GM Grimmi (2009), "[unholy rage](#)", <http://www.eveonline.com/devblog.asp?a=blog&bid=687>

GM Grimmi (2009), "[the way of the plex](#)", <http://www.eveonline.com/devblog.asp?a=blog&bid=684>

MMOBux, "[EVE Online ISK](#)", <http://www.mmobux.com/compare/eve/eve-online-isk>

Posted by [SecurePlay](#) in [Free-to-Play Games, Virtual Currencies & Microtransactions, Game Security, Gold Farming & Power-Leveling, Real Money Transactions \(RMT\)](#) at 07:51 | [Comments \(4\)](#) | [Trackbacks \(0\)](#)



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"but, at some level, does cost CCP Games money as players can avoid paying subscription dollars by earning sufficient currency"

Comments

Yea, but some of the buyers avoid it each month the buyer avoids. It nets zero, no loss in revenue.

[#1](#) locrian on 2009-08-25 16:57 ([Reply](#))

Not really. If I can "earn" by playing enough ISK to cover my next month's subscription, then I won't pay it, so I'm playing for free... costing CCP Games revenue.

[#1.1](#) SecurePlay on 2009-08-26 07:14 ([Reply](#))

But someone else paid the monthly fee.

You're playing for free, someone else is paying extra, CCP sees the same revenue.

[#2](#) locrian on 2009-08-26 18:07 ([Reply](#))

fold | [...]

[SecurePlay](#) about [Skill vs. Luck - Why Holdem is a Game of Luck](#)
Tue, 15.09.2009 07:32
Your choice does not affect the outcome of the game, only your participation / expected value.

[SecurePlay](#) about [Skill vs. Luck - Why Holdem is a Game of Luck](#)
Tue, 15.09.2009 07:22
Poker between "skillful" players is a game of skill. However, the logical decision, if I am NOT skillful, is to pl [...]

[Skip](#) about [Skill vs. Luck - Why Holdem is a Game of Luck](#)
Tue, 15.09.2009 07:05
You've got that exactly wrong here. My opponent has gone a II-in. What do I do? I use my skill to determine the [...]

[kareen](#) about [Please tell me your User Name & Password](#)
Mon, 14.09.2009 21:19
its doesnt do you are a liar i t doesnt come i serch no one h ave this username it have been delete your username is [...]

[anon](#) about [Jagex's Runescape adds Cell Phone SMS Payment Option](#)
Mon, 14.09.2009 20:14
u send them a text then they send u a pin, which u type in a nd then u get members

[Jack](#) about [ARG Advergame Attacked - Dan Brown's The Lost Symbol promotion subverted by Online Crooks](#)
Sun, 13.09.2009 21:54
Books written by Mr. Brown are nothing more than just Hollywood blockbusters with idea for simple people, special [...]

[Michael Mucha](#) about [Item Farming in Team Fortress 2 - The Idle Threat](#)
Sun, 13.09.2009 18:23
I'm not condoning cheating. It sucks. Ban them. Flog them. But "automation" does not automatically equal "chea [...]

[Slider2k](#) about [Item Farming in Team Fortress 2 - The Idle Threat](#)
Sat, 12.09.2009 22:08

- Virtually Blind | Virtual Law - <http://virtuallyblind.com> -

Chinese Pirates Sunk, But Pirate Servers Run Rampant

Posted By [Kenan Farrell](#) On May 9, 2008 @ 8:37 am In [Blizzard](#), [Contract Law](#), [Copyright Law](#), [Criminal Law](#), [DMCA](#), [International Law](#), [Providers](#), [Second Life](#), [Trademark Law](#), [Virtual Law](#), [Virtual Worlds & Games](#), [World of Warcraft](#), [ZT Online](#) | [4 Comments](#)

Three Chinese men have been jailed for operating pirate servers of Giant Interactive's MMORPG ZT Online, according to [Pacific Epoch](#). The men are ordered to pay a total of RMB 60,000 (USD \$8,586) in compensation to Giant for the servers that are said to have cost Giant a minimum of RMB 59,000 (USD \$8,443...the cost must be tied to lost subscriber fees). Chen Jian was sentenced to one year in prison for building the servers while his accomplices, Shi Zunkai and Sun Jun, were sentenced to 10 months and nine months, respectively.

Pirate servers (actually, server emulators) are unauthorized game servers run by a third-party. The game experience will be similar but not identical to that of official servers but lacks all official technical support. This typically leads to laggy or inconsistent game performance. Pirate servers are usually created by writing or using custom emulation software which mimics the behavior of the official server. Operators of pirate servers are even able to offer incentives to play on their pirate servers rather than the official servers, such as custom or new items, accelerated XP gain, or even the ability to go to war with your own faction.



[Wikipedia](#) provides a nice summary of some of the legal issues surrounding pirate servers:

Copyright and Reverse engineering: The first issue is a possible infringement of the game creators copyright. As the case of Lotus v. Borland demonstrates, recreating "methods of operation" is not a copyright infringement. Thus, emulating copyrighted material is not a breach. However, this demands that the complete emulator is a work of its own. Sometimes the original server software leaks out of the company that created the game, for example AEGIS (Ragnarok Online). Use or distribution of this is definitely a copyright infringement. Modified versions of such original server software are not considered to be server emulators. The protocol that is used for communication between server and client is not subject to copyright, in contrast it could theoretically be patented, whereas software patents is a disputed field also. There are cases where a game creator effectively shut down popular private game servers by threatening lawsuits due to obvious copyright violations such as offering the client for download, or offering downloads of modified files from the original game package.

End User License Agreement and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act: Another legal issue is the EULA. Today most commercial MMORPGs require the user to sign a clause not to create or use server emulators when installing the client he bought. As shown in the case of Bnetd Vivendi Universal v. Jung, the DMCA can be relied on as well if the lawsuit is in the United States — the DMCA is a US specific law, although there are similar laws in some other countries. They argued that server emulation requires the circumvention of copy protection. The server emulator company lost the suit and the bnetd.org domain was transferred to Blizzard.

Giant Interactive says the recent arrests prove the company's commitment to the fight against pirate servers, a fight Giant by no means is taking on alone. Everyone's favorite (ok, at least mine...for now) MMO operator, Blizzard, is [no stranger to pirate servers](#). In fact, it's pretty simple to find a reliable WoW pirate server...one quick Google search found [over 200 of them](#).



As Playnoevil mentions in [their coverage of the arrests](#), this type of arrest may only prompt pirate server operators to move their servers off-shore to countries that have weaker intellectual property protections, much like the online gambling business has already done in the US. But whereas the government is cracking down on gambling, it's the game companies who must do the heavy lifting against

[Especially so in China](#)

ere it's estimated that 90 percent of lawsuits against Chinese copyright and trademark violators are filed by infringed companies.

Obviously game companies should keep an eye on pirate servers, but to what extent? How much of a threat do they really pose? World of Warcraft has topped 10 million paying subscribers despite the proliferating pirates. Isn't it just as likely that consumers will take the bait and sample the pirate server, enjoy what they're doing (if you're a game company with a game that people don't enjoy, you've got bigger problems than a few pirate servers) but tire of the often unstable and buggy experience and therefore decide to become a paying subscriber? That's free advertising and can only help business. After all, every person playing WoW (even pirated WoW) is a person not playing your competitor's game and, more importantly, falling in love with yours.

On the other hand, there may be some trademark/counterfeit-like concerns...let's say a consumer wants to play World of Warcraft but somehow stumbles upon a pirate server. Looks like WoW, plays like WoW, even has WoW trademarks and copyrighted material all over the place? But it's not WoW?? A lot of that sort of activity and Blizzard's marks start to lose their source-identifying properties...we've seen [where that road leads](#). Blizzard doesn't want an inferior knockoff on the market, and so that's why we see Blizzard and other companies taking upon themselves a duty of quality control and enforcement on behalf of their consumer base.

Question for the comment section: Would there be any advantage to doing a similar thing with worlds such as Second Life? Would a pirate server make sense? Probably less if at all, since the experience is defined by being a part of "the grid."

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URL to article: <http://virtuallyblind.com/2008/05/09/chinese-pirate-servers/>

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Cheating comes to Monopoly City Streets

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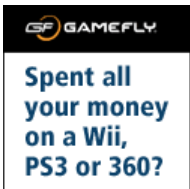
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Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Cheating comes to Monopoly City Streets

[Monopoly City Streets](#) has recently launched... it is an interesting concept: combine Google Maps of the Real World with the Monopoly.

The game is truly free. Players start with an initial pool of cash, earn rent for the properties they own, can improve their properties via buildings, and mess with other players in various ways...

a fairly standard social game.

And, it seems, plagued by the [expected cheating problems](#).

In fact, the game is going to be **reset/restarted** shortly,

Multiple Accounts / Collusion

This may be the source of all of the game's problems. Since there is no strong mechanism to tie an account to a person, players can create as many accounts as they wish. This allows players to share resource, create false transactions to boost their ranking in the game's **leaderboards** (in Monopoly, this could be done via "sham" sales at inflated prices).

Free accounts / Weak Identity + Trading / Player Interaction = Major Cheating Risk

Players also seem to have inordinate powers through hazards... this may come from collusion or could, conceivably, come from having too much game logic on the client (**The Old Authoritative Client Problem**) ... allowing a player to manipulate their game assets directly without being authenticated by the server.

... all of which are discussed in my book [Protecting Games](#).

Mr. Monopoly (2009), "[Cheating](#)", <http://blog.monopolycitystreets.com/2009/09/cheating.html>

Posted by [SecurePlay](#) in [Game Cheating, Griefing, and Scams](#), [Tournament Cheating, Ladder Hacks, and Advergame Attacks](#) at 07:02 | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [Trackbacks \(0\)](#)



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Dutch Police Arrest Seventeen-Year-Old for \$5800 Virtual Furniture Theft at Habbo Hotel

Posted By [Benjamin Duranske](#) On November 14, 2007 @ 6:52 pm In [Criminal Law](#), [Habbo Hotel](#), [Providers](#), [Sulake Corporation](#), [Virtual Law](#), [Virtual Worlds & Games](#) | [20 Comments](#)



Reuters UK is [reporting](#) that Dutch police have arrested a seventeen-year-old [Habbo Hotel](#) user for the theft of almost \$6000 worth of virtual furniture from other users of Habbo Hotel, a virtual world for teens.

An Amsterdam police spokeswoman confirmed a report that the teenager was accused of stealing 4,000 euros (2,844 pounds) [\$5857 US] worth of virtual furniture by hacking into the accounts of other users.

Four other 15-year-olds have also been questioned in the case, which was instigated by the Web site. They are suspected of moving the stolen furniture into their own online hotel rooms.

Habbo does not have an active currency exchange and discourages [RMT](#), but does sell “coins” for about \$0.20 each, which can be used to purchase virtual furniture and items (some are expensive [rares](#)), and play online games.

Commentary

A few things jump out here. First, for better or worse, more and more countries are taking virtual property seriously, even in closed worlds that do not acknowledge [RMT](#). It's just a matter of time before this happens in the U.S., and it is starting to look like the U.S. is falling behind. There must be “magic circle” protection for spaces that make an effort to remain play spaces, but when companies are exchanging real money for tokens, furniture, custom avatars, and the rest — sometimes a lot of money — the law has to recognize that the result of the transactions have real value.



Second, Sulake Corporation apparently got involved themselves — the case was “instigated by the web site” according to Reuters. Two years ago, I'd have bet on 10 comments against them for it. Now? I suspect they'll be mixed, at most. I think virtual world users are finding they appreciate a little hands-on governance when it comes to theft, gold farming, grieving, hacking, and all the rest of what makes virtual worlds and games less fun. Personally, as far as I'm concerned, good for Sulake; this is a seventeen-year-old who allegedly stole almost \$6000 worth of other kids' — mostly younger kids' — allowance money. Seems a fine place to draw a line.

And finally, RMT reality check. *Six grand?* In a virtual world for *teens*? How is that even possible? How much can this stuff be worth on a per-item basis, and how much pixelated junk can you fit in a Habbo Hotel room anyway?

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