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Inside Darknet: the takedown of Silk Road

Marie-Helen Maras reports on the unexplored underworld of cyberspace

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Abstract

The anonymity afforded by the Internet provides perpetrators with an environment within which they can operate with a low risk of detection. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in Darknet, which is considered the ‘underworld’ of cyberspace. Darknet consists of a collection of non-indexed domains; accordingly, these sites cannot be found using search engines like Google or Bing. To enter Darknet, Tor (the Onion Router), a privacy-enhancing application originally created by the USA Naval Research Laboratory, is used. Tor is ‘an anonymous Internet communication system that provides individuals (and organisations) with the ability to share information and communicate over public networks without compromising their privacy’ (Maras, 2014). When Tor is used, the ‘user's Internet traffic is routed through a worldwide network of volunteer computers to conceal the user's location and Internet usage’ (United States v Ross William Ulbricht, Superseding Indictment, 2013, 1).

Additional information

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