

Vietnam restricts online games after murder cases

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(AP) -- Vietnam has banned the advertisement of online games and restricted access after several cases in which young people committed murder or robbery to get money to pay to play, an official said Thursday.

The Ministry of Information and Communications' decision to crack down on [online games](#) follows a public outcry about their negative influence on youngsters, said ministry official Luu Vu Hai.

The ministry has temporarily stopped licensing online games pending the government's implementation of new regulations, banned their advertisement, and ordered Internet service providers to cut off Web access after 11 p.m to shops that offer games, he said.

Over the past year, Vietnam's press has reported several murders and robbery cases committed by young people to get money to pay for online games. In one particularly shocking crime, a 15-year-old girl was sentenced to 10 years in prison for strangling a 4-year-old girl from her neighborhood to rob her of earrings worth \$10 to pay for online games, state media reported.

Teenagers forming lines in online game shops is a common sight in the capital Hanoi - a city of 7 million people - where more than 3,000 such shops operate.

The government has licensed 22 gaming companies and 93 games, according to Thursday's Vietnam News.

Hai said the government is determined to eliminate online games with violent and pornographic content.

Vietnam tightly controls the flow of information on the Internet and has said it will not tolerate cyberspace being used to spread anti-government information, violence or pornography.

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