

Sex offenders booted from videogame playgrounds

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A computer gamer pictured in 2011. New York State's top prosecutor on Thursday announced that thousands of sex offenders have been kicked out of online playgrounds popular with young videogame lovers.

New York State's top prosecutor on Thursday announced that thousands of sex offenders have been kicked out of online playgrounds popular with young videogame lovers.

Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said that 3,580 accounts belonging to people compelled by law to register with authorities for sex crime convictions were booted from online videogame platforms in an operation dubbed "Game Over."

"We must ensure online videogame systems do not become a digital playground for dangerous predators," Schneiderman said.

"That means doing everything possible to block sex offenders from using gaming networks as a vehicle to prey on underage victims."

The sweep involved cooperation from Microsoft, Apple, Sony, Electronic Arts, Blizzard Entertainment, Warner Brothers, and Disney Interactive Media Group, according to the state attorney general.

"I applaud all the companies participating in this first-of-its-kind initiative for taking online safety seriously and purging their networks of sex offenders," Schneiderman said.

"Together we are making the online community safer for our children, not allowing it to become a 21st century crime scene."

New York law mandates that people convicted of [sex crimes](#) register email addresses, online monikers, and other Internet identity information with authorities, which can share details with online communities.

Approximately 97 percent of US teenagers play games online, with more than a quarter of those exchanges involving strangers, according to figures from the [Pew Research Center](#).

"We know that [sex offenders](#) target and lure children and how they look at the online community as their private, perverted hunting ground," said National Center for Missing and Exploited Children co-founder John Walsh, who is also host of the "America's Most Wanted" television show.

"This initiative is a strong model for other states, and it's also a great partnership with private sector companies who are demonstrating their commitment to children's safety."

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