

Criminal cybersquatters

June 28 2019, by David Bradley



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Cybersquatting was rife in the early days of the World Web of the 1990s. An individual would register a domain name that was perhaps associated with an organisation or company and even a trademarked term. The cybersquatter might then use the domain for their own purposes whatever they might be or endeavour to sell the domain to the

organisation. At first, it was unclear whether cybersquatting was illegal. Laws were tightened, domain registrars would take a dim view of such activity and commonly the domain would be handed over to what would appear to be the more legitimate owner. However, there are blurred lines when it comes to generic terms rather than company names or trademarks.

Some pundits perceive [cybersquatting](#) as unethical. It still goes on. Others suggest that it is beyond unethical it is criminal. Writing in the *International Journal of Social Computing and Cyber-Physical Systems*, a team from India suggests that cybersquatting, rather than being an artefact of an immature Web of a quarter of a century ago, is still rife and exploitative. The team offers many examples of cybersquatting and highlights how the activity is detrimental to the growth of the internet and society as a whole.

There may well be instances where cybersquatting was intentional. This author can point to a US government [website](#) that has essentially hijacked the name of a well-known personal and commercial website for its own use by using the [domain](#) with the .gov suffix where the .com already existed!

The team points out that there are no useful methods to prevent cybersquatting and in India and elsewhere it is increasing on a daily basis as new companies emerge only to find that the most pertinent domain for the website has been taken by a third party. There is a need to increase awareness of the problem before algorithms could be implemented at the registrar level to help preclude this unethical and often [criminal activity](#) on the internet.

More information: Manik Lal Das et al. Privacy-preserving targeted online advertising, *International Journal of Social Computing and Cyber-Physical Systems* (2019). [DOI: 10.1504/IJSCCPS.2019.10021908](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSCCPS.2019.10021908)

Provided by Inderscience

Citation: Criminal cybersquatters (2019, June 28) retrieved 23 June 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2019-06-criminal-cybersquatters.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.