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INTERNATIONAL CAMPAINGS AGAINTS DARK WEB

Comparing the Net with an ocean – a usual user is only “swimming” on the shallow. In parallel with an enormous amount of information, which is accessible for common internet-surfer, there is tons of another data, that is hidden from us. Searching systems, such as Google, can’t even find the Dark Web content, which is used for legal or illegal usage. The hidden side of the internet world became a shelter for unlawful groups, who use it for their aims: from gun or exotic animals trading, selling viruses or personal information, spying or laundering the money – to cruel video materials or child porn, which has attracted a long time ago attention of law enforcement agencies all around the world.

What is actually “Dark Web”? Dark Web – is an encrypted online content that is not indexed by conventional search engines. You can only access it with specific browsers, such as TOR Browser or I2P. It also provides a great anonymity with using Dark Web compared to traditional websites like Google [1].

Actually, Dark Web was found by US Navy in 2002 like an instrument for anonymous chatting in the Net.

As explained by internal security expert Kristin Finklea, the Dark Web content may be accessed for legitimate purposes and to conceal criminal or otherwise activities. For example, The Silk Road site - one of the biggest sites located on the dark side of the Internet. The Silk Road was like an online bazaar for contraband (mainly drugs) or illegal services. It generated about 1.2 million dollars from January 2011 to September 2013, after which it was demolished by federal agents [2].

On 26 march of 2019 The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, best known as Europol, launched worldwide campaign against Dark eb buyers or vendors in cooperation with law enforcement from Canada, United States and member states from European Union. From time-to-time actions have recouped the investments: law agencies made 61 arrests and shutdown 50 Dark Web accounts used for illegal activities. They executed 65 search warrants, seizing about 300 kg of drugs, 51 firearms and over 6.2 million of euro in different variants: from cryptocurrency to even gold.

Global actions were launched previously in Hague. It was coordinated by 60 experts from 19 countries in general and the main idea was to search for contraband, drugs, unmarked guns, document fraud,

dumping credit cards, etc. They recognized approximately 250 objectives and transferred control over them to the concerned countries. After such an enormous triumph, a wave of arrest swept around the world:

1. In Germany have started investigations against 39 Dark Web users, who were active on some forfeit sites;

2. The State Police of Saxony-Anhalt arrested some suspects for drugs trafficking;

3. The Austrian Federal Criminal Police Office, special units of Cobra and Wega and the Vienna State Criminal Police Office arrested a young man, who was living ritzy life by selling drugs over the world;

4. With the help of Europol, agencies of U.S directed operation SaboTor, which coordinated targeting drug organizations. The main purpose was to detect and shutdown vendors on the Dark Web and take apart criminal trafficking.

In general, you are not hidden from law enforcement, if you buy or sell forbidden stuff. Such demonstrated approaches make it clear, that police offices won't deal with crime in the Dark Web and will reduce the number of victims [3].

The Hansa Market, well-known dark market, was also seized by the U.S Department of Justice, with the help of Federal Bureau of Investigation and Drug Enforcement Administration. It was "Operation Bayonet". The main idea of it was to shutdown all servers of Hansa Market and AlphaBay (which was take downed earlier). With the help of Bitdefender, Europol Cybercrime Center was able to locate position of two admins of the marketplace in Germany. As a result, they were arrested by law enforcement. After that, Hansa has taken over control by Dutch National Police: they modified source code, which helped them allowed them to find easily passwords of users, to encrypt order information, IP-addresses, etc. In summary, for about 38,000 transactions were identified [4].

The second-largest Dark Web site – Wall Street Market, was also shut down after high-profile case about the Hansa Market. It was closed up by international law enforcement agencies, including Europol, U.S., German, Dutch and Romanian law enforcement. Three suspects were arrested in this case. Comparing it to the Hansa lawsuit, administrators were using only bitcoins or other cryptocurrencies for payment. Wall Street Market offered drugs and weapons, malware or stolen references for their visitors. About 1,150,000 accounts were registered on the site and over 60,000 offers had been placed. This made Market the second-largest bazaar in the Dark Web.

The website was ceased to exist after German Federal Criminal Police, supported by Dutch National Police, Europol, U.S. government

agencies (FBI, DEA, IRS), arrested three suspects. They also seize about 600,000 Euros in cash and six-figure amounts worth in cryptocurrency, as well as another stuff.

The Dark Web anyway is increasing in its popularity nowadays for researches, law enforcement or policymakers. But, no matter how much effort governments will spend on the dark side of the net – they won't clear all the data. Information about businesses, government issues or individuals all may rely upon the digital underground. It can be used at any ways: legal or illegal, how the buyer decides. In the future, as the technology development reaches the Dark Web, it is more likely that stealthiness of Dark Web will definitely improve and it will effect on how law enforcement will contend with evolving machinery to combat vicious users who exploit cyberspace, using the Dark Web [2].

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