

2008

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Recommended Citation

Griffiths, Marie; Light, Ben; and McGarrie, Ryan, "Antisocial Behaviour Orders: Unanticipated Directions in Social Network Site Development" (2008). *ECIS 2008 Proceedings*. 228.

<http://aisel.aisnet.org/ecis2008/228>

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ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS: UNANTICIPATED DIRECTIONS IN SOCIAL NETWORK SITE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Social network technologies, as we know them today have become a popular feature of everyday life for many people. As their name suggests, their underlying premise is to enable people to connect with each other for a variety of purposes. These purposes however, are generally thought of in a positive fashion. Based on a multi-method study of two online environments, Habbo Hotel and Second Life, which incorporate social networking functionality, we shed light on forms of what can be conceptualized as antisocial behaviours and the rationales for these. Such behaviours included: scamming, racist/homophobic attacks, sim attacks, avatar attacks, non-conformance to contextual norms, counterfeiting and unneighbourly behaviour. The rationales for sub behaviours included: profit, fun, status building, network disruption, accidental acts and prejudice. Through our analysis, we are able to comment upon the difficulties of defining antisocial behaviour in such environments, particularly when such environments, are subject to interpretation via their use and expected norms. We also point to the problems we face in conducting our public and private lives given the role ICTs are playing in the convergence of these two spaces and also the convergence of ICTs themselves.

Keywords: Social Network, Antisocial Behaviour, Online Networks, Online Communities.

1 INTRODUCTION

Within the social sciences, there is extensive research regarding the appropriation of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) within society and specifically in the home (Haddon 2006). This is particularly prevalent with the stream which takes on Roger Silverstone's idea of domestication - a concept which asks us to think about the differing meanings people attach to technologies, how they are experienced and how they are made to work to fit everyday routines (Haddon 2007). Such attention to the area of ICTs and society is important given its increasing significance within our lives, yet within information systems there is arguably still an overall focus upon appropriation within the workplace. That is not to say that there is no research on information systems and domestic contexts - there is of course work on computer art (Oates 2006), internet dating (Light 2007), internet pornography (Adam 2005) and peer-to-peer software (Mlcakova and Whitley 2004). Although this work exists, on balance, such work is in the minority and arguably more work in this area is needed to increase the relevance of information systems research to those in society - outside of a work organisation environment. In terms of a domestic context, one area which has increased in importance is online social interactions of the kinds found in online communities or social network sites. These are of specific note as such spaces are becoming increasingly entwined with everyday 'offline' lives (Carter 2005). Carter (2005) argues that online spaces are not necessarily places outside of everyday life - she cites that 69 per cent of the relationships developed within her site of ethnography 'Cybercity' successfully moved offline. Indeed, others concur. It has been said that the boundaries between offline and online social relationships are blurring (Mesch and Talmud 2007). Further, in the 'network society' it has been put that it is a misnomer to label online ties as insufficient and incomplete when compared with those from the 'real world' as they are part of the same social system (Hampton 2004). Such engagements as internet based social networks have also been argued to involve instances of online friends meeting up offline (Gennaro and Dutton 2007), and trajectories of development of artefacts themselves moving from the online space, offline (Fletcher and Light 2007). Moreover, historically we cannot ignore use of email by offline friends to interact online, nor the rise of sites such as Facebook which, allows offline friends to increase the sophistication of their interaction with those same friends online. Indeed, Facebook allows people to search for past friends and acquaintances resulting in old friendships being rekindled offline. Social network sites could be read in a deterministic fashion, their purpose being seen as only to facilitate networking for positive purposes. Yet, it is recognised that the ICT use does not necessarily comply with techno-rational models (Markus 1983; Franz and Robey 1984; Markus and Bjørn-Andersen 1987). Whatever was intended by the original designers of technologies, it is important to remember that ongoing work is undertaken, officially and unofficially (Fleck 1994; Stewart and Williams 2005). Indeed, this is evident in the wide ranging and body of work to date regarding social network sites which has examined themes of impression management and performance, networks and network structure, offline and online connections, privacy issues, the shaping of identity, cross cultural comparisons and implications of use with respect to schools, universities and libraries (boyd¹ and Ellison 2007). Our focus in this paper is to consider the unintended trajectories of development of two technologies which have elements of social network functionality built into them - Second Life and Habbo Hotel. Drawing upon ongoing studies of these sites, we focus upon acts and interventions that might be considered antisocial. However, it is important to note that does not categorise the effects of ICTs and society upon one another as a bi-polar, they are not all good and they are certainly not all bad either (Nakamura 2002). To contextualise our work, we first consider the extant knowledge regarding antisocial behaviour, the internet and social network sites.

¹ This is not a typographical error - danah boyd prefers not to use capitalisation in her name - see www.danah.org

2 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

Of course underlying this study is the question of what counts as antisocial behaviour? Given our work is being undertaken in a UK context, we decided to consider how the UK Government would define this. They state it: “includes a variety of behaviour covering a whole complex of selfish and unacceptable activity that can blight the quality of community life” (Home Office 2007). Although this seems a reasonable definition, in particular one has to ask, who deems behaviours as “selfish” and “unacceptable”. It is not the remit of this paper to enter into a debate regarding what antisocial means, definitions are always problematic anyway. However, we will keep in mind the UK Government’s perspective as an indicator of a mainstream conceptualisation as we endeavour to recognise when individuals prefer not to act altruistically whilst on-line. Notions of antisocial behaviour as related to internet are not a new thing. A cursory glance reveals a number practices that could be seen as problematic. Email has been discussed in terms of the exercise of petty tyranny and social control (Romm and Pliskin 1999) and with respect to flaming behaviours (Turnage 2007). In August 2007, computer hackers attacked GayGamer.net, the world’s largest gaming site for the gay community, by spamming the site with hate mail and uploading anti gay pictures (Vox 2007). There have also been several reports of cyberstalking and harassment online (Adam 2005). The recent Bryon Review (2008) warns of online predators seducing the vulnerable and the growing concern of cyber bullying amongst young people. Finally, and perhaps most alarming, in 2005 a man was stabbed to death over a virtual online game sword. At the time, the theft of the virtual sword was reported to the police who said the weapon was not real property².

Social network sites are usually presented as friendship oriented sites (albeit they have been commercialised and appropriated for professional networking of late). For example, it has been suggested that Facebook is predominantly used to maintain exiting offline relationships as opposed to meeting new people (Ellison, Steinfield et al. 2007). Facebook itself is advertised as “a social utility that connects you with the people around you”. Larsen, based upon her study of www.arto.dk, argued that such sites can be seen as a continuation of young people’s everyday (offline) lives and thus they try to be as sincere as possible (Larsen 2007). During her ethnography she observed several actions that led her to conclude that a strong sincerity discourse exists amongst those on Arto (Larsen 2007). Whilst we would certainly agree with Larsen that sincerity is an important feature of such interactions, Larsen would also agree that not all interactions are so well intended (as evidenced by her reference to ‘Fakers’ on the site).

To date, antisocial networking has tended to be reported in relation to sites which, ironically, allow people to network around people they dislike. Snubster.com for example, allows you to tell people you know they are ‘dead to you’ or ‘on notice’. It has also been described as one of the sites intended to poke fun at social network sites (Glasner 2006) along with Arsebook that claims to be an anti-social utility that connects you with the people you hate. Alternatively (Bigge 2006) has conceptualised antisocial networking as being against, and not participating in, social network sites. In terms of particular behaviours enacted out in such communities, the antisocial nature of such online environments has generally been tied to sexual deviancy, arguably in a rather sensationalised fashion. For example, in a very early example of what could be seen as electronic mediated social networking, a gay personals section of the French Minitel system was labelled an ‘electronic brothel’ and condemned by several public figures as a venue for the seduction of boys (Livia 2002). Recently around 30,000 registered USA sex-offenders have been removed from MySpace (Raleigh 2007) and Larsen reported that the Arto social network site was publicised as a an ‘Eldorado’ for predators and paedophiles and it was argued that girls in particular were exposing themselves in an inappropriate or soft porn manner (Larsen 2007). This is amidst much moral panic concerning sexual predators on

² ‘Game theft led to fatal attack’, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4397159.stm>

MySpace (Bahney 2006), although in other quarters such activity has been argued to be exaggerated (boyd, Finkelhor et al. 2007). We were therefore interested in examining other unintended trajectories of social network site development with the idea of what one, might see as antisocial.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This interpretive study is part of a wider multi-method research programme involving field work and ethnographies, aimed at understanding ICTs and society. In particular we are looking at social network sites, computer gaming cultures, the mechanics and products of social play and how this maps against the larger cultural and social context of the world we inhabit. This specific strand of interest arose out of the desire to consider what might be deemed antisocial networking and to add some balance to the discussion of such technologically mediated interactions as either wholly good or bad. For the purpose of our study we draw upon Habbo Hotel a teen online network and Second Life a MMO (Massive Multi-player Online) digital world.

Through informal channels two of the authors found out about Habbo Hotel and whilst looking around the outer edges of the site in an attempt to decide if this would be a suitable research opportunity, we came across a section on security which detailed elements of scamming. Thus we trawled through this area to understand the kinds of interactions that might be taking place. Thus far then, we had engaged with what Nakamura would call 'narratives about cyberspace' which inform user views and interactions and then we began to move into 'user-interface narratives'- where users encounter design issues and interact with them (Nakamura 2002). We could get some of this information from the various advice sections on the Habbo Hotel site as they were very clearly articulated as such interactions. However, we felt more would be gained by talking with some Habbo Hotel users whom we had access too. Thus, we interviewed several of these, with parental consent, and with them present as necessary. Early in this process, it was also felt that we should really also consider Nakamura's 'user-to-user narratives' those arising through, for example, online chat. Therefore, we took time to observe site in use via some Habbo Hotel users as they interacted online with other users and in the forums.

The second study has been ongoing for the past six-months based on one of the author's regular daily visits to Second life, for periods of thirty-minutes to two-hours, amounting to almost one-hundred hours of field-study and conducted following the virtual ethnography tradition (Hine 2000). A variety of methods for collecting data were used, in particular open-discussions and the visiting of different regions to understand the importance of the context in each discussion. Other methods included conversing with members of distinctly different group associations to explore how the chain of discussion differs from others. By doing this the researcher raised discussions and acquainted himself with a geographically diverse group of residents with a wide variety of shared and apposing interests. However, due to the restrictions of the enrolment process (of creating an avatar), the majority of this research has been conducted via two avatars, so one could remain in the 'Orientation Island' (that once left, the avatar cannot return) as this was a source of highly rich research opportunities and provided added interaction opportunities and exploits for both avatars. Furthermore, as this form of ethnographic research is highly controversial, the author has taken every step to inform and seek approval from research participants that any information they provide maybe used as research. However, for research subjects, such as passers-by, the author affiliated both avatars with research groups, so '*Second Life Research Group*' is displayed above the avatar, whereby checking either avatars' profile, explains the authors research intentions, information about the author and provides in-world access to the authors website, providing the facility for subjects to submit for any information pertaining to them to be excluded from the research process.

4 CASE STUDY 1: HABBO HOTEL

Habbo Hotel (Habbo) the 'gameless game', launched in Finland in 2000, is an online community currently operating in thirty two countries. Up to eighty nine million teenage Habbo avatars (Habbos) between the ages of 13 and 18, visit the site each month spending an average of over 30 minutes per session (Sulake 2008). Habbos are customisable online characters that inhabit, what is a simple graphic, isometric tile-based environment (as shown in Figure 1). There are three main worlds one based in the USA, another in Canada and a third in the UK. American Habbo sites are visited by over 2 million active users per month who have an average individual spend of \$10 per month for paying members, an indication of the potency this teen community site commands. In 2006 Habbo Home was launched to supplement the community and re-enforce it as a social network site. Habbo Home added more sophisticated profile pages that the Habbos can customise and personalise. Habbos communicate while in the Hotel via a chat system that is dependant upon distance. The tiled floor environment is used as a basis for this. If you are within five tiles of another Habbo you can hear (read) each others text, as the Habbos move away the text becomes garbled until it appears a series of dots. This system allows several conversations to occur in a small area without the Habbos interrupting each other. Users can meet up with existing friends, make new friends, buy a pet, play games together, personalise their own home pages or decorate their own private guest rooms with virtual furniture known as 'Furni'. The guest rooms are customisable and currently there are almost forty million of them across the network. Habbo provides a wide-range of Furni that can be bought or traded including refrigerators, chairs, beds, benches, toilets, television sets and teleporters. These Furni items are bought with Habbo credits or coins. The cost of credits depends upon how they are bought but they range from £3 for 35 credits if bought via your mobile phone account to £1 for 10 credits if bought online using a credit card. For example, a television and chair set costs 5 Habbo credits or 50 pence. The purchasing of Habbos credits represents over 50% of Sulake's revenue with the rest being made up from ingenious advertisers. The current virtual Furni on Habbo is estimated as having a total market value of around \$550,000,000 (Nutt 2007).

4.1 Antisocial Behaviour in Habbo

Habbos can trade with other Habbos to officially swap Furni if both parties agree; this can be done in official trading rooms on a Trading Floor. However, Habbos may deceive other Habbos to acquire their Furni; this is referred to in the Habbo community as scamming. Themed rooms are generally packed with Furni to display wealth and status and to indicate that the Habbos are not 'newbie's' to the Hotel. In one room a Habbo, reportedly, had eleven thrones, equivalent to the value of £25 if bought legitimately or £250 if the eBay auction price of a sold throne is a guide! As part of the data generation process our interviewees reported how scams worked. Scammers have accounts in all three worlds, USA, Canada and the UK. In these worlds they have numerous Habbos and several themed rooms. Scammers scam Furni and crash Habbos accounts for fun and really have little remorse. As we were told by one Habbo there is an attitude of 'let's get real here; we are dealing with virtual TVs and

Figure 1. An Excerpt from Habbo



fridges it is not real life'. When asked if they thought it was antisocial they replied: "yeah it is but it does not bother me, it is different to real-life and it is funny'. However a Dutch teenager has recently been arrested for allegedly stealing 4000 euros of virtual Furni bought with real money³. Table 1 presents a selection of the scams enacted in Habbo.

The 'Art Money' Scam	Habbo 'Club Members' are tricked into giving over their account details by one or more other Habbos on the basis of finding out about a (non-existent) cheat that will give them free Habbo credits on their account. Once obtained, the Furni is dispersed across a number of accounts and the scammers start to swap and trade the furni so avoid detection.
The 'Gold Digger'	One Habbo marries another 'Rich Habbo' in order to ingratiate themselves and acquire Furni. They then quickly 'divorce them'.
The 'Furni Whore'	Habbos offer to 'bobba' for virtual Furni. Bobba is a word used for any expletives and disallowed activities in the community. This exercise (apparently) is relatively easy to execute by finding a private room. Habbo rules against this kind of behaviour, the Habbos cannot touch each other, but this activity may be performed through words. However, we were told that sometimes 'the bobba' didn't happen once the Furni had been handed over.
The 'E-mail Scams'	Habbos are warned not to give out their e-mail addresses used to register with Habbo. Scammers send e-mails that are designed to mimic official Habbo e-mail. The e-mail may ask a Habbo for their password, direct them to a bogus website and where they are asked to sign in with the Habbo details.
The 'Rogue Decorators'	Habbos pose as room decorators, acquire member login details and steal Furni instead of redecorating the room.

Table 1. Examples of Habbo Scams

More ominous antisocial behaviour that Habbo has been unable prohibit is racist and homophobic activities amongst the Habbos. There are some basic controls in place such as the word 'bobba' to replace any profanities or 'hate speech' that maybe used. The hierarchy of policing the network site is by an overall 'Hotel Manager' then there is a 'Community Manager' who is responsible for moderation throughout the virtual community, employing the services of in-game Moderators or 'Mods'. If Habbos are deemed to be breaking rules or behaving antisocially they will be either observed first hand by a Mod or reported on so a Mod can deal with the incident. Mods have certain powers, they can send individual Habbos a message, which appears, publicly in a pop-up window, and they can also mute Habbos, 'kick' them out of a room or ban them from Habbo. Nevertheless this moderation process of empowering Mods with too much influence and authorisation is problematic. Teen forums are awash with accounts of racial, homophobic and bullying activities on the Habbo sites. Accompanying this we found recorded instances of racial activities on You Tube⁴ with certain Habbos being banned because they are black or have an Afro hairstyle. There are also images of Habbo post-its notes stuck at the entrance to some rooms saying 'Whites Only', alongside these are homophobic comments on the post-it notes saying 'No faggots allowed', 'gays not allowed' or that you can catch AIDS or HIV from the pools. Habbo has made no official comment regarding this type of antisocial behaviour but has attempted to help set-up and promote anti-racism groups. They also advise members to report when other Habbos use 'hate speech or make rude comments about a Habbo's race, religion, gender or sexuality'. The response however amongst the Habbos has been an annual protest in the guise of professionally co-ordinated raids with the objective to crash the Habbo sites. The organised anti-racism raiders are known as the 'Nigratz' against an alternative organised group 'white skinned albino avatars'. The Albino group is *reportedly* mostly made up of Habbos who are Mods. The Nigratz are easily recognised with a dress code of black (Armani) suits, black shoes, brown skin

³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/7094764.stm>

⁴ YouTube – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JyoQXEdOGA&feature=related>

and an afro haircut. The Albinos also have a dress code of black clothing but with a black hat and white skin. A publicity campaign is used to generate awareness and interest of proposed raids. The intention of previous raids was for the 'Nigratz' to flood every room, to block doorways or pathways and crowd out public areas ultimately blocking the pool areas. There were thousands of Habbos involved in the raids and the attack was strategically planned on a global level, synchronising the raid across different countries. The raids were effective in meeting their objective by crashing several countries Habbo sites. In response to the Nigratz raids opposing Albino raiders grouped together to fashion the shapes of a swastikas and burning crosses.

5 CASE STUDY 2: SECOND LIFE

Second Life', since its launch mid-2003, has grown to be the largest MMO digital world. Second Life has moved from the traditional gaming ethos, towards providing a social environment, similar to that of traditional open-chat-rooms, but that can three-dimensionally represent the world in a macrocosm where users are free to do and say as they want, within a virtual three-dimensional environment, without the limits that have been imposed upon them in real-life. Encompassing an audience, exceeding nine-million registered users worldwide, Second Life has grown to become a unique amalgamation of technologies, ranging from grid computing and streaming technologies. Second Life comprises a finite virtual three-dimensional environment spanning thousands of high-end-servers to provide a persistent virtual world (a 'metaverse') rich in cultural, economic, political and religious diversity for registered users to socialise, play and exchange items of interest. The way in which Second Life has been constructed breaks many of the boundaries imposed upon us in the real world. The primary bridge being the ease and ability to socialise with other residents matching specific criteria (e.g. shared interests) through group associations or shared places of interest. For instance, Second Life allows residents to socialise via groups (e.g. Second Life Star Trek Fan Club) or in related environments (e.g. the Second Life Star Fleet Academy), that often provides settings similar to that of the movie stage settings. Thus, residents are able to socialise with like minded people, in an environment they are comfortable in; or in many cases encourage competition within the community (at a tacit level), without even needing to speak, to create the most life-like replicas of (in this case, Star Trek) memorabilia such as clothing, equipment, or facsimiles of their favourite characters. This approach to socialising has also led to the construction of sexually or criminally oriented groups and areas of Second Life as well, but in some cases, this type of soliciting is considered antisocial by other residents, as the competition sometimes focuses around, different looks, the size of genitalia or development and use of the most disruptive/malicious scripts. Although this reflects aspects of Second Life as it is now, this has substantially changed from prior releases due to numerous factors, including: internet gambling laws (banning all in-world gambling), intellectual property rights of 'in-world' creations (cars, clothing and most importantly land) (Haughey 2003), monetary rights and restrictions (money laundering and tax evasion) and the transfer of illegal material (child pornography and copyrighted material).

5.1 Antisocial behaviour in Second Life: Griefer Practices

Griefer practices in Second Life often revolve around the permissible configuration and ownership of land, construction and development of menacing tools and scripts and coordinated attacks of rival groups or communities; that can irreparably damage an avatar, the environment or even the hardware supporting the 'Second Life' environment. The most devastating griefing tactics are often coordinated 'prim' or 'texture' attacks (also known as 'Lag-Bombs'), particularly at live venues or popular 'sims'. Although these tactics are becoming less frequent, they overload the 'sim' (or the host server) by flooding them with bogus traffic, more often than not, using objects with replicating or high 'prim' counts, or high resolution images (that take longer to load, due to their complexity). This ultimately, slows the 'sim' to a stand-still and forces Second Life administrators to restart the 'sim', expelling any connected residents. Although this seems grievous, the worst that can happen to the residents is to be

teleported elsewhere. So, although Grieferers, in this case, spoil the fun for everyone else, they are simply attacking the environment, with the intent to overload it. However, although this is often the intentions of some Grieferers, others will attack residents without coordinating with peers, simply on an ad-hoc basis, by visiting specialist in-world griefing shops ('the Second Life black market') for the purchase of malicious scripts or guns, that exploit the features of the Second Life environment. The most popular scripts being 'pushing' or 'trapping' tools. Such tools exploit the vertical and acceleration limits of the environment (as there is none) by propelling other residents upward at accelerated speeds, or across several sims. As a result, a resident could be indefinitely suspended in 'orbit' or trapped within an object, unable to move, even if the application is restarted. This can ruin the environment of a novice user who may not be able to recover from this situation. Although there are ways of mitigating against these, other griefing tactics include exploiting the size, shape and appearance of in-world creations, to the extent that they cause other residents difficulty in navigating around them, or created in such a way that allows them to be thrown/propelled at other residents (similar to the concept of how in-world weaponry works). Further these are occasionally crafted into forms which might be perceived as taboo. Genitalia are a particular favourite to the extent that 'penising' has become a common technique.

Other problems arise with respect to the ownership and usage of land and objects created in Second Life. As we have said, it is possible to purchase land, build a house and furnish it within Second Life. This requires economic investment – it translates in money that can have value offline. Thus, we have become aware of certain avatars buying land next to a piece of land that has already been developed and then a process of intimidation ensuing in order to devalue the land of the neighbour so they can buy it at a 'knocked down' price. Another example was a story we were told about the problems between two neighbours because one of them engaged in BDSM (Bondage, Domination and Sadism) activities in their 'garden'. The other neighbour found this uncomfortable to watch and so 'grew' a row of large trees to block the view. That is not to say such practices are not accepted within Second Life, particularly with the 'Red Light Center'. Within this environment, such BDSM activity would be considered the norm, even educational, as would recreational drug use (a section on this is devoted to the UK Governments 2003 Antisocial Behaviour Act). As part of the ethnography ANON earned a tab of ACID for simply sitting in a chair for 15 minutes (raising the popularity of that particular sim), that can be reused anytime (all this did was give the illusion to him and the Second Life environment that he was swerving, falling and moving erratically without any detrimental effect to his avatar once the object was simply deactivated). ANON also completed similar tasks to earn new and different forms of genitalia, piercing, tattoos and weaponry. Residents freely walk around sporting these – which from an adult perspective could be seen as amusing. Though, notably when ANON entered another 'sim' that presented a different ethos to the sims these objects had been acquired from, this sometimes represented a problem and seemed antisocial. Indeed, ANON witnessed avatars being banned by the sim proprietor(s) on this basis. There have been numerous exploits of the technology itself, rather than the metaphor (of another world), as being used antisocially, bridging in-world and real-world issues. Such exploits have often revolved around, breaking or providing a work-around of or copying in-world creations to the real-world then back again as their own creations (using developer tools, such as 'CopyBot'). This is done to break in-world copyright protection, often, to make improvements and sell them on as their own. Other issues, as with most on-line realities (as mentioned in the Habbo case) are often focused around in-world scams to cash-in on their (virtual currency) Linden Dollars (L\$) or real-world cash, through bogus advertisements to buy in-world products by transferring L\$'s to another avatar that claims to send the item, but more often than not never does; or transfer (real-world) cash via eBay or PayPal for an (allegedly) good exchange rate on L\$'s.

5.2 In-world and real-world responses to antisocial activities in 'Second Life'

As Grieferers are clearly in the minority of Second Life residents, there are numerous ongoing measures to stop, restrict and identify them before they ruin the Second Life experience for other users. Linden Labs response to these has been to establish various policies regarding in-world behaviour; the most

well-renowned is the ‘Big Six’ which covers the consequences for the most heinous behaviour – i.e. (1) intolerance, (2) harassment, (3) assault, (4) disclosure, (5) indecency, and (6) disturbing the piece. The consequences of breaking these can result in suspension of an avatar, or even a permanent ban. Unfortunately, most Grieferers are quite technically competent. Thus, when one of their avatars is banned for ‘griefing’ they simply create another. In an attempt to prevent this, Linden enrolled a mandatory ‘Hardware Identification’ process within their client software, as part of their Privacy Policy, to ban and track misbehaving residents and (the physical) computers associated with them to continue to block them. Although obvious tricks of the trade include, simply using another computer, formatting the computer and starting again or using virtual machinery to emulate different hardware, this is reported to have had a very beneficial and positive response.

However, for Grieferers that manage to evade this, Second Life residents volunteers have established and pushed for the ability to restrict and control specific functionalities and design features of the Second Life environment, including: (i) ‘prim quotas’ and ‘speed restrictions’ – to prevent overloading the sim; (ii) ‘no-push zones’ – to stop ‘pushing’ and ‘orbiting’; (iii) ‘no-build zones’ – to stop the exploit of menacing objects; (iv) ‘no-kill zones’ – to prevent avatars from dying; (v) script controls – restricting the execution of malicious tools; and (vi) abuse reports – for residents to submit reports of abuse to an investigatory committee. Unfortunately, there has to be a level of compromise, without intending to heighten further motivation for Grieferers, restriction of these functionalities would remove some key components that residents prefer to remain within the environment. For instance, residents would not be able to show off their favourite objects and tools, such as cars, airplanes, and certain items of clothing. Thus, finding a suitable arrangement is difficult depending on the audience the sim is aiming to attract. Considering this, land-owners, long-standing residents and Second Life mentors now tend to hand-out note-cards, advice and tips explicitly stating a code-of-behaviour, restrictions of the sim and more often than not, explain the most appropriate ways to deal with Grieferers – often by making use of the resources the ‘sim’ has to offer, such as chairs and dance-floors. ANON now finds himself handing out similar advice. Similarly, when developing and hosting live gigs, venues or any publicised event, most long-standing Second Life residents are apprised of the most appropriate techniques to best utilise the Second Life environment and mitigate against the risk of Grieferers – the most well-known being, to span the centre stage across multiple sims (at adjoining corners), reducing the chances of the entire venue going-down and potentially quadrupling audience potential (from fifty to two-hundred).

In respect to the in-world economic and political foundations of Second Life, this has also changed quite dramatically, particularly due to issues of intellectual property and copyright restrictions of in-world objects, changing from an open-democratic model towards a more authoritarian model (Rymaszewski, Au et al. 2007), empowering some users over others in respect of group moderating, ownership of land and permissible access to resources. This has also involved the empowerment of certain established societies made up of Second Life residents, such as the ‘Anti-Griefer Society’, or even groups against power-hungry individuals. Aside from the ‘Anti-Griefer’ society, thousands of groups have now emerged, some with hundreds, if not thousands of members, each their own objectives, many of which with a grievance against other Second Life residents or policies. Such groups control and ban residents that do not conform to their code-of-conduct. Such schemas include notions of appearance and reputation or the objects attached to them (e.g. guns, genitalia, etc). A typical example is the Anti-Furry Society a group who do not like avatars presented in the form of furry animals. Another group is more individually focussed against a particular avatar, Bobby Cunday. They state: “*Well there is a member here who will screw you over after time, If you know him or want to hate him join this group and support the hate for this underage child. He sold my land and caused me to lose 50k worth of items.*” Second Life against Bobby Cunday.

6 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

We believe that information systems research needs to increase its engagement with the application of ICTs in domestic contexts. That is not to say that research related to work organizations should cease. Of course this is important, as is understanding the links between ICTs work organizations and society. However, given the lack of research regarding information systems in domestic contexts, here we offer a study of two applications that are used in such domains. In particular we attend to their networking features given the increased interest within information systems of late regarding social network sites. It would be all too easy to fall into the deterministic trap of seeing such technologies play out at the designers originally intended – in the main, arguably, to socially network for positive purposes. Whilst clearly the designers’ aims for such technologies have been fulfilled in this respect, there have also been other unintended trajectories of appropriation within ‘pro-social’ network sites and also the development of ‘antisocial’ network sites. However, although the notion of antisociality has been associated with social network sites, to date this has presented has as networking around dislikes, the naming of some social networks as antisocial in purpose and non-participation in social networking per se. In our cases we take a different line and attend to what might be seen as antisocial networking behaviours and practices within sites that were not intended to be enacted in these ways.

Through the analysis of two online environments, Habbo and Second Life, both which have social networking capabilities, we highlight a range of what might be seen as antisocial behaviours and the reasons for their enactment. A summary of our findings is shown in Table 2 although these are in no way a definitive list of possible practices and intentions.

Case	Practice	Intention
Habbo	Scamming	Profit Fun Status Building
	Racist/Homophobic Attacks	Prejudice Network Disruption
Second Life	Scamming	Profit
	Sim Attack	Fun Network Disruption
	Avatar Attacks	Fun Prejudice Network Disruption
	Non-conformance	Fun Network Disruption Accidental
	Counterfeiting	Profit
	Neighbours from Hell	Profit

Table 2. Forms of Antisocial Behaviour and Potential Reasons for their Enactment

The desire to generate a profit is one rationale we encountered in both environments. This presented itself in the form of scamming in Habbo and scamming, the counterfeiting of goods and being a ‘bad’ neighbour, to devalue land so that it could be easily purchased. In both environments it is important to recognise that although both operate on the basis of virtual economies, they both have offline value. Thus such activities undertaken online can have economic effects offline. Fun was a further rationale. In Habbo, this was a further reason for scamming – it is seen as a pastime, for some Habbos profit is not a motive, they never sell the Furni they have acquired via this route, it serves also to build status, the more Furni you have, the better you look. In Second Life, fun is experienced by overloading or disabling other users’ avatars or whole sims and by entering spaces and not conforming to those norms of those spaces. Such avatar/sim attacks and non-conformance in spaces is also enacted in order to disrupt the network for its own sake. However, tied to this is sometimes an agenda based on prejudice.

This is most starkly evident in Habbo where people organise raids on the basis of racism and homophobia but equally clear in Second Life in groups such as the Anti-Furry Society. Finally, we also encountered behaviour being perceived as antisocial in Second Life where, by accident, members did not conform to accepted social conditions.

This paper has focussed upon those activities that might be considered antisocial. For brevity, we have borne in mind a fairly stereotypical notion of how antisocial behaviours might present themselves as dictated by the UK government. It "includes a variety of behaviour covering a whole complex of selfish and unacceptable activity that can blight the quality of community life" and we neither contest nor support this definition but have used it as a trajectory for this study (Home Office 2007). Certainly, it might seem fairly obvious to transpose this definition of antisocial upon sites such as Habbo and Second Life. As Johnson argues the benefits and dangers of informal interaction online are reproducible off-line and thus the ethical issues that arise online not so different to those that arise offline (Johnson 1997). Yet, we still return to the problem of who defines, what is acceptable? We certainly don't have the answer for this, suffice to say, although we have 'badged' some practices reported here as antisocial, this was for brevity and to highlight what some people might consider antisocial. Of course we agree that some of the practices we have seen, in particular those involving prejudice are unacceptable. However, the problem of defining what is acceptable is further complicated by the problems of classifying what kinds of environments we are dealing with and this also compounds any notions of determining the level or severity of 'supposed' antisocial behaviour that maybe occurring. Habbo defined as the 'gameless game', is clearly more than a game, yet users might not see this. As has been stated elsewhere, how we define things brings implications for how they are regulated (Spitz and Hunter 2005). Thus, tensions exist between what developers and users believe constitutes unacceptable behaviour. For example, it has been documented that some users of Friendster 'Fakesters' posed as celebrities and iconic fictional characters in order to increase the number of 'friends' they had. In response the company banished Fake profiles (and indeed some 'genuine' ones where members chose to have non-realistic photos). This was interpreted by users as the company not sharing user interests and, arguably led to a shift of membership towards other user driven sites such as MySpace (boyd and Ellison 2007). Moreover, the convergence of so many different kinds of applications such as email, social network sites, internet dating sites and digital gaming environments that have the potential to traverse our public and private lives certainly raises interesting issues about how we conduct ourselves in one space when others may interpret that space for themselves on their own terms. What seems entirely innocent and regular to you may be totally unacceptable to someone else.

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