

THE CONSEQUENCES OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM ON THE INTERNET

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INTRODUCTION

The Internet has provided the far-right fringe with formerly inconceivable opportunities. Online, racists, anti-Semites, and anti-government extremists can reach a much larger audience than ever before and can more easily portray themselves as legitimate.

Anyone using the Internet may inadvertently be exposed to hate online. When uninformed or easily influenced people – particularly children – come across hate propaganda, they can fall prey to its deceptive reasoning and adopt hateful beliefs themselves, sometimes going so far as to act on what they have read.

Gauging the affects of online hate on this vast population of Internet users presents enormous difficulties. No reliable measurement has been taken of the number of Internet users who find and read hateful material online. Nor can one safely generalize about the ways in which this material affects the beliefs and actions of those who read it. Yet there is a subset of this enormous group of Internet users about whom substantial information does exist: known, active, right-wing extremists.

Though the number of active right-wing extremists is relatively small, the harm they can cause is significant. By spreading their views, racists, anti-Semites, and anti-government "patriots" encourage and sustain prejudice in the mainstream. In addition, these extremists are often ready to break the law in support of their beliefs.

The Internet has provided the means for extremists to create an "electronic community of hate." In the Internet age, extremists are no longer isolated from others who share their beliefs. Now, they can communicate with thousands of their compatriots with the click of a mouse, from the comfort of their own homes. Just as it has benefited millions of ordinary people, the Internet has profited, connected, and inspired extremists in previously unimaginable ways.

This report will detail three important, measurable respects in which the "electronic community of hate" strengthens the work of right-wing extremists offline. First of all, the Internet has provided them with instant and anonymous access to propaganda that inspires and guides criminal activity. Secondly, it has helps them to more effectively coordinate their activities. Finally, it offers them new ways to make money.

These, then, are actual, measurable consequences of right-wing extremism on the Internet and should be of concern to us all.

CREATING ELECTRONIC COMMUNITY OF HATE

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- provides instant and anonymous access to propaganda that inspires and guides criminal activity
- helps more effectively coordinate their activities
- offers new ways to make money

These consequences of right-wing extremism on the Internet should be of concern to us all.

Online, racists, anti-Semites, and anti-government extremists can reach a much larger audience than ever before. Anyone using the Internet may inadvertently be exposed to hate online.

Though gauging the affect of extremist material on the vast population of Internet users presents enormous difficulties, substantial information does exist about a small subset of this group: right-wing extremists.

In the Internet age, these extremists can communicate with thousands of their compatriots with the click of a mouse.

INSPIRING CRIMES AND GUIDING CRIMINALS

Far-right propagandists encourage their readers to become "lone wolves," extremists who commit violent crimes alone, and those with the greatest potential to become "lone wolves" may find the Internet particularly appealing. Beyond finding inspiration online, extremist criminals have found nuts-and-bolts tactical guidance on the Internet.

Before the World Wide Web

In 1988, years before the Internet was widely used, racist skinheads from the group East Side White Pride in Portland, Oregon attacked three Ethiopian immigrants with a baseball bat and steel-toed boots, killing 27-year-old Mulugeta Seraw.

An investigation of the murder, which resulted in three convictions, revealed intimate ties between the culprits and WAR, a violent white supremacist group led by Tom Metzger of San Diego, California. Metzger had written to East Side White Pride that a WAR official would "teach" them "how we operate" and "help" them "understand more about WAR."

The "national vice-president" of WAR trained East Side White Pride members how to attack minorities, and he later explained, "Tom Metzger said the only way to get respect from skinheads is to teach them how to commit violence against Blacks, against Jews, Hispanics, any minority."

When the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and ADL sued Metzger and WAR for their role in the murder, the jury awarded \$12 million in damages to the family of the slain man.

The Internet and Anonymity

The Internet seems tailor made for extremists wishing to avoid similar lawsuits.

By the early 1990s, Tom Metzger was using E-mail, and he established a Web site in November 1995. The site features unbearably crude caricatures of Blacks and Jews while applauding "racial and cultural separatism worldwide." Calling whites "Nature's finest handiwork," Metzger declares, "your race and only your race must be your religion."

On the Web, Metzger makes his aggressive rhetoric available to millions without knowing anything about the people who are reading it. Anyone can anonymously visit his site, study his propaganda, and act on it. In fact, Metzger and others encourage their readers to become "lone wolves," extremists who commit violent crimes alone, telling no one of their plans and involving no accomplices who may later testify against them.

Just as propagandists like Metzger see the Internet as an excellent tool for encouraging violence without paying the consequences, those with the greatest potential to become "lone wolves" may also find the Internet particularly appealing. While paranoid individuals might refuse to meet in person with others who share their beliefs, they may very well be comfortable reading incendiary propaganda on the Internet, remaining isolated until they violently act out what they have read.

The Internet and Tactical Guidance

Beyond finding their inspiration on the Internet, right-wing extremists have gone online for nuts-and-bolts tactical guidance when planning crimes. These extremists have posted bomb-making instructions and hit lists on the Internet. Even advice on street fighting with minorities, similar to the guidance that WAR provided to East Side White Pride, has appeared online.

Should we blame the Internet?

Some may be tempted to blame the Internet for these developments, but the Internet does not itself cause extremist crime. The message of hate, not the medium, gives rise to violence, and the Internet can be used with equal facility to spread positive messages. Furthermore, the Internet serves as but one source of information among many that influence extremists to act - others include printed publications, shortwave radio broadcasts, personal interaction with other extremists, and public access cable television. Nonetheless, due to its ease, speed, and economy of use, the anonymity it affords, and other factors, the Internet is becoming a primary factor in the inspiration and guidance of Right Wing extremist crimes.

INSPIRING EXTREMIST CRIMES

In 1999 and 2000, three well-publicized hate crimes demonstrated the influence of the Internet on radical and violent extremists.

The Williams Brothers: Murder and Arson in California.

In California in June 1999, Matthew Williams and his brother Tyler were charged with murdering gay couple Gary Matson and Winfield Mowder and helping set fire to three Sacramento-area synagogues. Police found boxes full of hate literature at the home of the brothers, though they were apparently "lone wolves" and not members of any extremist group.

In his first year at the University of Idaho, Matthew Williams had joined a charismatic Christian church. Two years later, he left that church. Searching for a new spiritual path and relatively isolated because he did not own a functional car, Williams turned to the Internet.

Described as a "born fanatic" by acquaintances, Williams reportedly adopted nearly every radical-right philosophy he came across online, from the anti-government views of militias to the racist and anti-Semitic beliefs of the Identity movement. He regularly downloaded pages from extremist sites and used printouts of these pages in his frequent attempts to convince his friends to adopt his beliefs.

Benjamin Smith: A Racial Murder Spree in the Midwest

After being named "Creator of the Year" in 1998 by World Church of the Creator (WCOTC) leader Matt Hale, Benjamin Nathaniel Smith went on a racially motivated shooting spree in Illinois and Indiana over the July 4, 1999 weekend. Targeting Jews, Blacks, and Asians, Smith killed two and wounded eight. As law enforcement officers prepared to apprehend him, he took his own life.

"It wasn't really 'til I got on the Internet, read some literature of these groups that...it really all came together." Benjamin Smith told documentary filmmaker Beverly Peterson months before his spree. "It's a slow, gradual process to become racially conscious."

The Webmaster for WCOTC at the time of the Smith rampage, Kelly Daniels, admitted that Smith had sent him "about five" E-mail messages "congratulating" him on his Web work, indicating that Smith regularly consulted WCOTC Web sites.

Richard Baumhammers: Racist Murder & the Internet

Pittsburgh gunman Richard Baumhammers murdered members of several minorities in April 2000. He was convicted of killing five people and sentenced to death in May 2001. His victims were a Jewish woman, a Black man, two Asian-Americans, and two Indian men.

Before his shooting spree, Baumhammers visited Tom Metzger's WAR Web site. (Metzger later characterized him as "a white man" who "decided to deliver Aryan justice in a down home way.") Baumhammers also joined the E-mail mailing list of the hate rock band Aggressive Force, repeatedly visited the popular white supremacist site *Stormfront*, and downloaded material from hate sites created by members of the neo-Nazi National Alliance.

On the Web site for his fledgling Free Market Party, Baumhammers called for an end to non-white immigration. He stated that "almost all" present day immigration "is non-European," and "the effect of such massive waves of immigration has been disastrous for Americans of European ancestry." Commenting on the 2000 presidential candidacy of former Senator Bill Bradley, Baumhammers wrote, "because of his 'pet

theme' of racial harmony and civil rights, European-Americans of all backgrounds should be leery of a Bradley presidency." Baumhammers asked the Council of Conservative Citizens, a prominent racist group, to provide a link from its site to his, and the Council complied.

PROVIDING GUIDANCE FOR CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

Beyond inspiring their readers to commit crimes, propagandists on the far-right fringe have used the Internet to explain exactly how to commit many crimes.

With a click of the mouse, extremist readers can learn about marketing scams, or discover how to use "paper terrorism" techniques such as filing specious liens. Significantly, extremists online also teach each other how to engage in violent crime.

Bomb Making

Instructions for making bombs and other terrorist tools are readily available online to all types of extremists, and many white supremacist Web sites have either posted bomb-making instructions or linked to such material.

In 1999, British neo-Nazi David Copeland planted nail bombs in a Black neighborhood, an Indian area, and a gay pub in London, killing three and injuring more than a hundred. Copeland later wrote, "I bombed the blacks, Paki's [sic], [and] Degenerates," and he boasted, "I would of [sic] bombed the Jews as well if I got a chance." A court handed Copeland six life sentences for his crimes. He had learned how to build his bombs by visiting a cybercafe, where he downloaded *The Terrorist Handbook* and *How to Make Bombs: Book Two* from the Internet.

"Explosives are very effective in our cause," writes "Death Dealer," the anonymous creator of the racist skinhead site *Better than Auschwitz*. "They should be deployed more." *Better than Auschwitz* includes pictures of bombing victims and detailed bomb making instructions.

Instructions for Weapons Use

In addition, *Better than Auschwitz* features instructions for using knives and brass knuckles in fights against minorities, as well as tips for hand-to-hand combat. A "Nigger Baiting Made Easy" section describes "the various methods of selecting muds and queers, and getting them to fight, or throw the first punch." Such material resembles the instructions White Aryan Resistance gave the skinheads of East Side White Pride before their violent rampage in Portland.

Providing Hit Lists

Online, extremists may find guidance not only on how to attack, but also who to attack. Anti-government sites frequently post information about judges, law enforcement officers, and other government officials. Alongside graphics dripping with blood and links to sites calling the murder of

abortion providers "justifiable," the Nuremberg Files Web site supplies detailed personal information about doctors who allegedly provide abortions, including their social security numbers, license plate numbers, and home addresses. The list of doctors reads like a list of targets for assassination. Names listed in plain black lettering are still "working"; those printed in "Greyed-out" letters are "wounded"; and those names that are crossed out ("Strikethrough") indicate doctors who have been murdered ("fatality"). At the site, the name of Dr. Barnett Slepian, who was murdered in his upstate New York home by a sniper in 1998, was crossed-out within hours of his death, indicating that he had become a "fatality."

COORDINATING EXTREMIST EVENTS

Countless computer users now use the Internet to coordinate their offline activities. They take advantage of the speed of online communication, using the Internet to draw people to spur-of-the-moment gatherings in a way that slower, more traditional forms of communication could not. In addition, they use the Net like a bulletin board, posting notes on electronic message boards and E-mail mailing lists. Anyone from anywhere around the world can read and respond to such messages, at any time of the day or night.

Today, going online is the quickest and easiest way to find out about most extremist events, some of which may be advertised solely on the Internet. A few right-wing extremist Web sites, such as *Stormfront*, compile listings of upcoming events sponsored by a variety of organizations, and news about events often spreads from one extremist E-mail mailing list to another.

Going a step further than simply listing events, some extremists use the Internet to actively manage those events. Two significant manifestations of this trend involve

Hate Rock Concerts

Using the Internet as an organizational tool, the Imperial Klans of America - the largest Ku Klux Klan group - and the Hammerskin Nation - the most violent and best-organized neo-Nazi skinhead group - have staged successful hate rock concerts, drawing attendees from faraway places. The success of hate rock concerts demonstrates the benefits of careful, long-term event coordination online

Nordic Fest

Over three days in May 2000, the Imperial Klans of America (IKA) held a concert and rally, Nordic Fest, in Powderly, Kentucky. Co-sponsored by the hate rock record label Panzerfaust Records, the event featured hate rock bands, vendors, tattoo artists, food, guest speakers, and a swastika lighting.

Extremists viewed information about Nordic Fest at a password-protected Web site. The site provided a list of area motels, directions to the area via train and plane, and a rundown of the vendors selling their wares, among other information.

Potential attendees from more than two dozen states, as well as other nations, coordinated transportation to the event using the guestbook at this site (a guestbook is one kind of electronic bulletin board). More than a dozen extremists volunteered to provide car rides; more than two dozen messages contained requests for such rides.

These messages evinced a spirit of cooperation among extremists, and it seems that those who posted messages would not have connected with each other had they not gone online.

If any people out in Southern Ca [sic] are going and wanna split the gas cost I will surely go.

CApeckerwood

Anyone want a ride?

Brandon - Southern California

I'm really happy this will be going on, about 5 of us coming from Chicago why the hell is it that I don't know any of the people that signed here who are from Chicago? Let's unite!!!

marek1

The IKA Web site claims that 383 people attended Nordic Fest despite "3 days of rain," and the group held another Nordic Fest in May 2001. Potential attendees seeking or offering transportation again posted messages to an online guestbook.

Help. I am in desperate need of a ride to nordic fest. I will help out with gas, beer, food, or what have you. !!!

Jon Doe of North Carolina

if you are from Charlotte or west towards the mountains or can get a ride into charlotte...I might be able to arrange something for you so drop me a line.

Will V.

Following the event, the IKA Web site exclaimed, "This years [sic] Nordic Fest-2001 was Great! Everyone had a very nice time... Start making your plans to be here for next years [sic] Nordic Fest-2002."

Hammerfest

In October 2000, the Hammerskin Nation sponsored Hammerfest, a hate rock concert and skinhead convention in Draketown, Georgia. Bands performing at Hammerfest included Brutal Attack, White Wash, Dying Breed, Extreme Hatred, Code of Violence, and Hate crime, all of which play hard rock music with racist lyrics.

"There is absolutely no excuse (minus death or babies) that you cannot attend the greatest musical event of our times," asserted the staff of Panzerfaust Records when announcing Hammerfest online in July 2000.

"This event will include some of the greatest White Power bands on the globe and it will be held on private property with a restaurant, beer store, and round the clock security."

A few months later, another message for those interested in coming to Hammerfest appeared in the "Upcoming Events" section of the *Stormfront* Web site. This message provided essential logistical information to potential event attendees, including advice on which airport to fly into, information about camping on the site of the concert, and guidance on which items to bring (beer) and which to leave at home (drugs, weapons).

Most significantly, the message told interested parties exactly how to find Hammerfest. "The exact location will not be disclosed until the weekend of the concert," explained the Hammerskins. "Flyers will be distributed at area motels in Bremen, beginning Friday before the show. A cell phone will also be activated for people to contact, for directions, in case you were unable to meet up with people at the motels in town. This number will be released in October."

Hammerskin Nation maintained a number of online bulletin boards where extremists considering attending Hammerfest shared information. In answer to a question about where to stay on a tight budget, *ChicagoSkin88* suggested that concertgoers "find a hotel and sleep in the lobby or find someone" that is "having a party after" and "crash there."

Hey, I'm in New York City and I need a ride down to Hammerfest 2000, "If anyone in the area can give me a ride down, I'd chip in a lot of gas and also hotel if you want.

NYC_HATE.

I will be passing thru [sic] Atlanta on the Friday night before the Fest, Anyone needing a ride from the airport or the bus station, let me know.

Wartooth -- Oslo, Norway

When *chaos88* from the Netherlands wondered who from "Germany, the Netherlands or Belgium" would rent a hotel room with him, he got the following answer"

There are about ten Dutch Hammerskins going to Hammerfest...Give us your private E-mail address and we'll talk

Skip

A few days after Hammerfest, Vinland Records sent a message to its mailing list that proclaimed Hammerfest "a huge success!!!" Approximately 300 people attended the event

"PATRIOT CONFRONTATIONS"

"Patriot" confrontations prove the impact of online requests for an immediate, rapid response to a particular crisis. These confrontations are spontaneous happenings created when anti-government extremists attempt to "rescue" fellow extremists who are resisting law enforcement authorities.

The Indianapolis Baptist Temple

Indianapolis Baptist Temple (IBT), a church run by Pastor Greg J. Dixon and his son, Pastor Greg A. Dixon, was involved in a long dispute with the IRS.

The Dixons are the leaders of the "unregistered churches" movement which believes that churches should obey no laws or regulations whatsoever. In 1984, IBT stopped withholding employee income taxes and paying Social Security and Medicare taxes in an attempt to sever all ties to the federal government. In September 2000, a Federal District Court ordered law enforcement to seize IBT for failure to pay its taxes.

Following the announcement of this court order, a flood of online propaganda, in conjunction with printed newsletters and shortwave radio broadcasts, helped rally anti-government extremists to defend IBT. Many extremists wrote online articles in support of IBT, and some posted personal accounts of their visits to the church.

The official IBT site featured frequent updates on the state of the church, which supporters could choose to receive via E-mail, and extremist mailing lists often republished these messages. In one message, the Dixons pleaded, "We must have your help immediately. Please come and stand with us no matter how long you can stay. We can provide food and an area to sleep while you are at the church."

Greg A. Dixon claimed that hundreds of supporters called or E-mailed him to offer help. "I tell them to come, bring all the friends you can," he explained.

The November 14 date set for the seizure of IBT came and went, and church supporters, among them many anti-government extremists, continued to arrive. Ultimately, after 92 days, the standoff ended peacefully when the government repossessed the church.

Two Year Stand-off in Tennessee

In 1987, when the Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee Airport Authority instituted a noise abatement program that involved purchasing and demolishing homes in an area near the Memphis airport, the family of Bill and Carolyn Cockrell refused to sell their house, despite the fact that the government offered to pay them more than the market rate for it. By 1994, the Cockrell house was the last one standing in the neighborhood. Finally, a county court issued a warrant to remove the family on January 17, 1997.

Bill Cockrell looked for help from Drew Rayner, head of the Mississippi Militia. Rayner penned a message that "patriots" distributed widely on the Internet. "Billy has requested militia support regarding the illegal and unconstitutional seizure of his house and property," Rayner wrote. After attorneys notified the Cockrells that a demolition notice had been posted, more calls for assistance appeared online. "You are cordially invited to a campout...on the grounds of the Cockrell home," read one. "The purpose of this little get together will be to witness that the Cockrell's home will not be unlawfully demolished." On January 30,

1997, when the house was due to be bulldozed, more than a dozen militia members stood watch there. Not until March 1999 did law enforcement successfully seize the Cockrell home.

Confrontation in Massachusetts

Another confrontation took place in Hamilton, Massachusetts, where John and Rhett Sweeney resisted Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) attempts to repossess their estate. The Sweeneys argued that the bank loaning them money had reneged on a promise to provide them the funds needed to develop profitable housing lots on their land. In June 1997, the Sweeneys blocked all roads leading to their property. They proceeded to set up a Web site publicizing their plight, and the standoff became a topic of discussion among anti-government extremists online. Militia members traveled to the Sweeney home, stood guard, and used the Internet to communicate with their compatriots. In February 1998, the authorities finally ended the standoff, removing John Sweeney from the property when his militia supporters were temporarily absent.

MAKING MONEY ONLINE

Using the Internet helps extremists meet their financial needs in a variety of ways. Right-wing extremists

- sell goods online
- get paid for promoting products sold online by others
- go online to market scams
- use the Internet to solicit donations

Extremists need funding to accomplish their goals. Though using the Internet is inexpensive, purchasing weapons, renting space for events, printing literature, and traveling often involve substantial costs. Likewise, foregoing conventional work requires an alternate source of income. Full-time extremists who desire financial independence must earn enough income from their activism.

Like many other Americans, extremists quickly recognized the significant benefits of doing business online. Internet businesses can keep track of their sales and customers more easily, and they reach a vast number of potential buyers, including shoppers in other countries, 24 hours a day. Online, merchants verify credit cards more quickly and easily, and they no longer need to spend time and effort typing card numbers written on order forms into their computers. Most significantly, Internet businesses need neither brick-and-mortar storefronts nor catalogs. These advantages are particularly useful to extremists, who often have difficulty finding printers willing to produce their catalogs and stores willing to stock their products.

SELLING GOODS

Extremists most often try to make money online by selling extremist versions of common products to other extremists. For example, instead of spending his money on a New York Yankees jersey at an online sporting goods store, an extremist might visit the White Heritage Emporium site to purchase a "White Pride World Wide" T-shirt.

Selling Hate Music

Online, extremists devote more space, time, and energy to marketing rock music than any other product. The music on hate rock CDs effectively carries the white supremacist message to teenagers, and these CDs routinely sell for at least three times the amount they cost to produce. Because of their popularity among extremist consumers and their ties to violent extremist organizations, two particular distributors of hate rock CDs, Resistance Records and Panzerfaust Records, deserve special attention.

Resistance Records, founded in 1993, sold as many as 50,000 CDs per year before legal troubles led to its decline in 1997. The remains of Resistance were bought by William Pierce, leader of the National Alliance, in 1999 (the National Alliance is the largest and most active neo-Nazi organization in the United States). Pierce reinvigorated Resistance and predicts gross sales of more than \$1 million in 2001. Based at the West Virginia headquarters of the National Alliance, Resistance reportedly receives about 50 orders per day, with each order averaging about \$70 worth of merchandise. Many of these orders come via the well-designed Resistance Web site, which features articles from Resistance magazine and an online "radio station" that plays songs from the CDs in its inventory.>

Founded in September 1998 by former Resistance Records employee Eric Davidson and racist skinhead Anthony, Panzerfaust Records of Newport, Minnesota financially supports the largest and most violent racist skinhead group: the Hammerskin Nation. "Panzerfaust supports Hammerskin Nation 100%," Anthony commented in an interview with the Hammerskin Nation magazine, *Hammerskin Press*. "Together we have put out some great music and Panzerfaust will always be there to help sponsor and contribute Hammerskin projects and music."

Panzerfaust and the Hammerskins co-sponsored the Vinland Tour 2000, featuring Swedish group Pluton Svea, during March 2000 in cities including Detroit and Cleveland, Texas. Hammerskins play in many of the bands that have recorded for Panzerfaust, and these same bands perform at concerts sponsored by the Hammerskins. The Panzerfaust Web site sells CDs by such bands and promotes their concerts. According to Eric Davidson, "when you support Panzerfaust, you're not pouring money into a hole...you're helping finance a very serious fight."

Marketing Mainstream Items

Not all items sold by extremists online express extremist beliefs. By carrying products not obviously expressive of their beliefs, extremists potentially profit from sales to customers who are not extremists. For example, the Militia of Montana Web site sells common items such as sleeping bags, compasses, and First Aid kits in addition to books like "Patriots: Surviving the Coming Collapse," an important anti-government tome.

Moreover, consumers shopping at Web sites that are run by extremists but do not carry any items that are evidently extremist in nature may remain unaware of the politics of the people they are doing business with. For example, most consumers probably cannot distinguish the *Hammer War* Web site, which is run by neo-Nazi Michael Hammer, from legitimate Web sites that sell German militaria from the Second World War to collectors and historians. Citing his "passion for military history," Hammer sells "rare and hard to find" Nazi pins, postcards, maps, and other items. On his site, he divulges nothing about his personal views and neither publishes nor sells hate literature. Though his customers may have no way of knowing it,

Michael Hammer in fact published *The New Order*, the newsletter of Nebraska neo-Nazi Gary Lauck, during the four years that Lauck was imprisoned in Germany for distributing neo-Nazi literature.

Selling Services: Web Design and Web Hosting

Finally, right-wing extremists use the Internet to sell not only goods, but also services. Two popular services, Web site design and Web hosting, simultaneously enrich sellers and help buyers more effectively spread hate online. Twenty-two year old Kelly Daniels of Ormond Beach, Florida, heads the most prominent extremist Web site design team, Candidus Productions. In 1999, he told a reporter that his company had 15 to 20 customers paying up to \$300 each in fees and was "widely looked upon as being the best in Web design for White Racialism." According to Candidus Productions, "Regardless of whether you are selling a product, or trying to get a message out there, a professionally designed web site is what you NEED to get people to notice you." Former Klan leader Don Black, proprietor of the *Stormfront* Web site, offers space on his Web server to other sites for a \$10 to \$30 monthly "suggested" contribution. "Stormfront is an association of White activists on the Internet whose work is partially supported by providing webhosting for other sites," Black writes. "With increasing pressure to censor politically unfashionable ideas, we must work even harder to ensure our point of view continues to be accessible."

PROMOTING PRODUCTS OF OTHERS

Though many extremists operate businesses online, doing so can require considerable time and effort. Using the Internet to promote the products of others is less demanding but still profitable.

Selling Ads Online

The promotion of such products commonly involves placing ads on Web sites. Don Black charges an advertiser on his *Stormfront* Web site up to \$15 for every 1,000 times someone views his ad, and Black claims that *Stormfront* welcomes nearly 3,500 visitors per week. The racist Council of Conservative Citizens Web site encourages readers to inquire about advertising rates for its "Shop-Right" page, an "On-Line Market for Southern Patriots & Euro-Folk" that features ads for an anti-immigration book, Confederate flag bumper stickers, and other items. While some extremists do charge advertisers, the payment many receive for accepting ads comes in the form of services, not cash. Many Web site hosting services used by extremists do not charge their customers but instead bring in revenue by selling space for ads on the sites created by those customers.

Taking Advantage of Non-Extremist Businesses: Referral Fees

Some online businesses pay extremists a flat fee for each new customer they refer. PayPal, a legitimate online payment service that does not hold extremist views and has upwards of six million customers, gives registered users \$5 for each friend they persuade to open an account. Extremist groups such as World Church of the Creator (WCOTC), Panzerfaust Records, and Sigdrifa have referred their supporters to PayPal. "This is a very easy way to raise much-needed funds for our holy struggle," commented Brother John B. of WCOTC in an E-mail message to the WCOTC Women's Frontier mailing list. Tom Metzger promises extremists \$50 for each project referred to the "website construction division" of his group White Aryan Resistance (WAR), calling this opportunity "a clean and quick way to help finance your operations."

Other companies pay Internet users who refer customers a percentage of the items sold to those customers instead of a flat fee. Amazon.com offers registered "Associates" rewards of up to 15% of the purchase price of items bought by customers they have referred. Web sites for the Holocaust denial organization Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH) and white supremacist publisher 14 Word Press have taken advantage of this opportunity. WCOTC actively encourages its members to create Web sites for participation in online affiliate marketing programs such as LinkShare and Commission Junction, thereby "generating revenue for WCOTC." Fearful of rejection from these programs on ideological grounds, WCOTC urges members to refrain from openly expressing their racism on sites they create for this purpose

MARKETING SCAMS

Many extremists, both online and off, use scams and frauds as a way to fill their pockets. Like extremists who sell goods or promote products sold by others, those who market scams target other extremists. Often, the victims of these scams do not report them to the authorities because they, extremists themselves, distrust the government.

"Prime Bank Instruments" - A Ponzi Scheme

In May 2000, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) brought to public attention a scam engineered by anti-government extremist John Wayne Zidar of Gilbert, Arizona and two accomplices. Zidar attracted conspiracy theorists and others on the far-right fringe to his World Community Educational Society Web site and other Web sites with claims that "the entire monetary system of the United States and the free world itself is nothing more than a giant Ponzi scheme." Promising them returns upwards of 120 percent per year, he sold them "prime bank instruments," investments that he claimed are free of risk and government regulation. According to the SEC and the FBI, these investments were bogus, and in fact, all "prime bank" offers are scams. Zidar and friends used some of the more than \$50 million they reportedly collected from investors to pay off early depositors making withdrawals, giving them the false impression that they had actually reaped returns on real investments. According to court documents, much of the rest of this money was deposited in the offshore bank accounts of Zidar and his associates or spent by them on new luxury homes and cars.

When the FBI and the IRS raided the homes of Zidar and one of his accomplices, Zidar posted a passionate press release on his Web site defending himself. Other right-wing anti-government sites characterized him as a victim, and one portrayed him as a helpful "teacher" of "adult distance learning classes" on topics including "the banking and government systems which run the modern economic world." Bob Caruso, the attorney representing Zidar, called the SEC civil action against him a "lie" as big "as those at Waco and Ruby Ridge." When Zidar appeared in federal court, more than 50 of his victims gathered in the lobby of the U.S. Attorney's Office to demand that the government stop persecuting him.

"Pure Trusts"

Just as John Wayne Zidar claimed that "prime bank instruments" reap tremendous returns, other extremist con artists assert that the "pure trusts" they sell will shield the assets of their customers from creditors and tax collectors. In actuality, "pure trusts," like "prime bank instruments," are a sham. They lack two primary attributes of legitimate trusts: some person or organization pays tax on the income generated by the trust, and the person placing assets in the trust does not retain control of those assets. Owners of "pure trusts"

detected by the IRS end up paying the government much more money in taxes and penalties than if they had simply reported the income they were trying to hide.

Don Henson of West El Paso, Texas, who has been active in anti-government Texas secessionist groups, sells "pure trusts" at his online store. "No leader, monarch, dictator, president, legislature, or other terrorist organization, publicly recognized as legitimate or not, has the right to restrict any individual's life, liberty, or property," claims Henson, who explains that pure trusts operate under "common law," free from the "sometimes arbitrary rules of the government." According to Henson, "pure trusts were formerly available only to the very rich," but now he sells them "for only" \$1,249. A Web user interested in buying a "pure trust" from Henson needs simply to fill out a form on his Web site and enter his credit card number.

In court cases such as *People v. Lynam* (1968), the State of California has held that promoting "pure trusts" constitutes fraud. Yet Lynne Meredith of Sunset Beach, California, a leading figure in the extremist tax protest movement, openly markets "pure trusts" online. According to Meredith, such trusts protect assets from "vultures" such as tax collectors and creditors, and they have "NO accounting, bookkeeping or reporting requirements," "NO Income Tax Withholding or Social Security requirements," and "NO quarterly tax payment or reporting requirements." Meredith charges \$795 for the first "pure trust," \$695 for each additional trust, and \$1,750 for three "pure trusts."

SOLICITING DONATIONS

Some extremists use the Internet to ask their supporters for money not in return for goods or services, but simply to support their activism. For example, the National Alliance makes contributing more convenient for its members by accepting credit cards online. Visitors to its Web site can purchase a new membership for \$15 or pay their monthly dues of \$10 or more. About 2,000 people nationwide belong to the group.

Threatening to Curtail Online Activities

Yet most far-right organizations seem less successful than the National Alliance in fund-raising. Though information about the success of their appeals is sparse, frequent complaints voiced by extremists about the lack of financial support they receive, as well as threats that they will curtail their activities if they do not receive more money, indicate that few supporters send them generous contributions.

"I want to take this time to let you all know that I will be taking this website down shortly," wrote August Kreis, a leading proponent of the anti-Semitic theology known as Identity, on his Posse Comitatus Web site in December 2000. "I no longer can afford to continue with the lack of support shown by the failure of regular contributions to this ministry." After receiving a "steady amount of e-mails" in response to this statement, Kreis decided to keep the site open but grant access to "Members/Supporters ONLY." Presumably, these "Members/Supporters" have sent Kreis donations.

Holocaust denier Ingrid Rimland has also asked her readers for financial support. "Twice a year, as posted on my website, I ask my readers to support the Zundelsite with a free-will donation," she wrote in a February 2001 "ZGram" E-mail mailing list message. "Those of us who put our heads on the block need you. We can't keep on going without you. We need not only your verbal support and occasional expression of appreciation – we need your financial support." Rimland pledged to remove from her mailing list those subscribers who neither made a donation nor contacted her to tell her why they could not contribute.

In January 2001, the Militia of Montana asked subscribers to its E-mail mailing list for "a \$15.00 donation per year (4 cents a day)," citing "costs involved in maintaining an e-mail alert list." Without these donations, M.O.M. stressed that it "will be forced to shut down this part of our operation," but the group promised those donating by February 15 that their "service will not be interrupted."

Providing Premiums in Exchange for Contributions

In August 2000, Panzerfaust Records, Resistance Resistance, and other hate music merchants announced on various extremist Web sites and E-mail mailing lists a joint promotion in support of the Aryan Nations Legal Defense Fund. At that time, Aryan Nations was being sued by Victoria and Jason Keenan, who were chased and shot at in 1998 by the group's security guards (the Keenans eventually won \$6.3 million in damages with the help of the Southern Poverty Law Center). "Aryan Nations is making a call to ALL for help with their Legal Defense Fund, because it could be you or your organization next," read the announcement. "A victory for Aryan Nations is a victory for us ALL!" Supporters who donated \$15, online or via regular mail, to the fund received their choice of any one of thirty white power CDs from the participating companies. In October 2000, Vinland Records, which participated in the campaign, posted on its Web site a "thank you to everyone who helped make the Aryan Nations fundraiser a huge success!"

A similar promotion by hate music distributor Strikeforce Records benefited the white supremacist women's group Sigdrifa, which takes its name from a Norse mythological maiden. An announcement sent via the Sigdrifa E-mail mailing list urged supporters to order "some great new [white power] music and support SIGDRIFA at the same time!" For more than a month, Strikeforce donated \$1 to Sigdrifa for every item sold. In addition, Strikeforce donated the proceeds from an auction of the hate rock LP "For Segregationists Only" by Johnny Rebel.

Using Crises to Raise Money

Extremists may more successfully raise funds when focusing on a financial need caused by a particular crisis, such as the lawsuit brought by the Victoria and Jason Keenan against Aryan Nations. In addition to their pleas on behalf of Aryan Nations, white supremacists online have asked for contributions to support the legal defense of extremists such as Don Black and Alex Curtis.

Described by one advocate as "a selfless and stalwart supporter of White racialists everywhere," Black asked in October 1998 for money to pay the "heavyweight attorney" he retained in the face of "extraordinary attempts" to shut down his Stormfront Web site "through the court system." That year, Stormfront had been named in two lawsuits, one concerning threats against Pennsylvania civil rights activist Bonnie Jouhari, and the other relating to the posting of a copyrighted newspaper article at the anti-Semitic Jew Watch site.

In November 2000, Federal authorities charged white supremacist Alex Curtis of San Diego, California with conspiracy to violate the civil rights of various individuals, including public officials. "Will you please contribute money to ease the burden on Alex and his parents?" asked Alex Curtis supporter Elena Haskins on her "Wake Up or Die" Web site. In a message to his E-mail mailing list, Rocky Suhayda of the American Nazi Party wrote of Curtis, "I want everyone on this list alone, to SEND HIM \$5 to HELP WITH GETTING DECENT LEGAL REPRESENTATION. IF everyone does this, he would have at LEAST \$10,000." Tom Metzger



offered a free, one hour videotape of himself to any supporter donating \$20 to Curtis. Despite these efforts to aid him, Curtis agreed in March 2001 to plead guilty to the charges against him.