

## WORLD



### DARK WEB

## Project American promises hunt terrorists on the Internet

Published on 20/12/2007 at 14h49m

Fernando Moreira - O Globo Online



RIO - In a first reading, the name may even cause terror: Dark Project Web But it is exactly the goal undermine the structure of terrorism that expands the internet, according to its creator, Hsinchun Chen, the University of Arizona.

World afora, pipocam sites that disseminate threatening messages from extremists, scenes of American armoured vehicles in flames hit by a mortar or an explosive on the verge of a road, technical laboratory teaching step by step how to make a bomb, images of hostages and even humiliated even beheaded, U.S. soldiers being shot by Franco-shooters and even manuals teaching and kill Americans in the Middle East. Identified, the site is closed. Hours later, those responsible for it - mere unknowns - find a gap to put the vehicle back on the air propagator of their ideas.

This scenario, said Chen, with the days can be counted in the USA. For the scientist of the Laboratory of Artificial Intelligence, "University of Al Qaeda Web," as he calls the set of sites that spread terror, their operators would have crawled after thorough analysis. For legal obstacles, the team of Chen can not identify the alleged terrorists. This, says Chen, will be in charge of the intelligence agencies that should receive the results by Dark Web, which has funds of \$ 4.3 million - a major donor is the National Science Foundation of the USA.

-- Currently, the web is the most efficient tool of terrorists. The Dark Web will help identify the leaders of high-risk operating in cyberspace - says Chen.

The system allows, with a very rapid analysis, which valuable information on the operators of the sites and that the visit often and leave comments to be crossed. When you move through the Internet, the alleged terrorists leave clues digital, explains Chen. This trail includes greetings and other words often used, the score, accentuation, errors applicants, the syntax and how they encode for multimedia files and links on the web.

A team of Chen developed a software called Writeprint, which was originally created to determine the authenticity of words used by William Shakespeare. The software allows a combined analysis of style of writing and technical elements. The database of Dark Web has about 500 million pages of documents, videos, images, e-mails and posts.

Manually, as the security agencies had worked, the work of identifying threats in forums with tens of thousands of participants is to "obtain drinking water from a fire hydrant," says Chen.

With the expansion of terrorist sites, many messages circulating in languages other than Arabic, starting point of the project Dark Web The Writeprint was adapted for the analysis of data from Internet users who post messages in English, French, Spanish and even Chinese. Some of them, Chen believes, would be in South America, taking advantage is the structure created by criminal drug traffickers.

**Dark Web will help identify the leaders of high-risk operating in the**

## RESISTANCE

But some experts in the information security and terrorism look Dark Web with caveats and still expect that the efficiency of the Writeprint is proven in the "real world" in the same way as more modest projects that use human work.

-- The Dark Web is important, as well as many other projects and studies that monitor the presence of terrorists in net. The Dark Web are using machines to computerized search, which saves time, the workforce and human spending - explains the GLOBO ONLINE Gabriel Weimann, a specialist in international terrorism at the University of Haifa in Israel. But has a price: the depth of analysis and knowledge of studies with 'researchers' computers may not match those made by human researchers. Which human eye sees and decodes, a robot never succeed. In my own research, monitoring site now 6,000 terrorists, I use assistants who see and understand better and more deeply than robots - adds.

Already Todd Stewart, director of the National Academic Consortium for Internal Security of the USA, the project must be monitored closely so that it does not turn a "witch hunt".

-- Like other research efforts, the Dark Web has great potential for abuse if not properly controlled or if the initiative is not really a scientific research - said the GLOBO ONLINE Stewart, manned

**Dark Web has great**

the State University of Ohio.

## potential for

---

Read the interview below that Hsinchun Chen granted the GLOBO ONLINE:

**The GLOBO ONLINE:** Why do you believe the project Dark Web is so important in the fight against terrorism?

**CHEN:** The Web is currently the most efficient tool and greater extent to which terrorists can reach their audience and new recruits.

**The GLOBO ONLINE:** You often use the phrase "University of Al-Qaeda web." Who are the masters and students of this university?

**CHEN:** Students are from all over the world and are well adapted to cyberspace. There are sites and leaders of forums terrorists who are guiding and teaching young people to be radical and violent. They do not exist only in the Islamic world. Many of them are of a second generation and live in various Western countries. It is possible to track and combat the leaders and their apprentices vançada technology using a computer.

**The GLOBO ONLINE:** Today, sites considered terrorist activities are analyzed by security authorities in order manual in the United States and in several European countries. According to your project, the situation changes considerably. Please count us more about this different approach, taken as radical organizations on the Internet.

**CHEN:** With advanced tools, rapid and automated we can seek and identify potential radical elements on the web. The apparatus of the Dark Web will allow researchers and analysts monitor more effectively and efficiently sites and forums terrorists. We have up to an automated tool to determine how a site radical is formed and details of user behavior. Our work is based on computational linguistics.

**The GLOBO ONLINE:** Do you believe it is completely possible to plan an attack on the Internet similar to those of September 11, 2001 without the authorities know?

**CHEN:** The US is certainly the main target of terrorists. But most of the European Union and other Western countries are also in sight. The Web is only part of the operation of the agents of terror. An operation as of September 11 require more than the internet. Meanwhile believe that communication and coordination of operations for the web is a fundamental part of the process.

**The GLOBO ONLINE:** Since 2005, sympathizers of terrorist groups have been spreading extremist sites by all continents. He believes that they have some help from hacker to reach a larger audience?

**CHEN:** We found no proof yet. Hackers and extremists usually come from different communities. In addition, the technology is used by extremists in the majority of cases, more commercial. Already hackers usually use the replication of tools for research on the web and other ferrmantas of invasion developed by themselves. Of course, we can not discard in the future an intersection of the two groups.

**The GLOBO ONLINE:** In your opinion, South America could be used by alleged terrorists in action on the web?

**CHEN:** It is likely. Especially if apoderando networks of gangs and drug traffickers existing, which can be bought and do not have the due attention of the authorities. They (terrorists and other criminals) have the same enemies!

© 1996 - 2008 All rights reserved the Infoglobo S / A. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

---