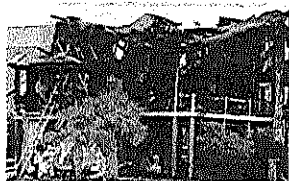


DEADLY BLAZE



Fire kills 7 college students.

Nation 5A



LEGEND DIES

Country star Porter Wagoner dies.

Region 2B

ANTI-DROUGHT FESTIVAL

Festival draws few visitors, less rain

WOODSTOCK, Ga. — It was billed as a rain festival to fight Georgia's drought, and even included a rain dance, but turnout was slim and precipitation was even scarcer than people.

"Not much of a turnout," landscaper Linda Boyer said Saturday, squinting against bright sunshine under a cloudless sky and scanning the nearly empty parking lot sprinkled with several tables of water-related activities and volunteers.

Competition was part of the problem. "There's a lot of festivals going on elsewhere — the Ellijay Apple Festival, the pumpkin patches, haunted houses, Cagle Dairy's Corn Maize Festival ...," Boyer said.

BIGFOOT IN PA.?

Images stir debate among believers

RIDGWAY, Pa. — It's furry and walks on all fours.

Beyond that, about the only thing certain about the critter photographed

Monday, October 29, 2007

TIMES DAILY

WORLD CHAMPIONS



Boston sweeps Rockies to win World Series.

Sports 1C

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Police using technology

Law enforcement use social networking Web sites in the battle against crime

By Ambreen All
Medill News Service

An attractive 20-something female pokes you on Facebook. You notice on her profile that she shares your passion for punk rock and grew up in the town where you went to college. You're intrigued, so you "poke" her back, giving her access to your profile.

What you don't know is the profile is run by the local police department. It's a virtual undercover cop, looking for access to your profile to find informa-

tion that could implicate you in an investigation and give authorities access to your full name, phone number, list of friends, even where you work.

Web sites have been used by tech-savvy criminals for years as a way to recruit gang members and give signals to accomplices in robberies and bombings. But now, the everyday criminal has started leaving virtual footprints.

Online social networks, such as Facebook and MySpace, have provided unprecedented information about sus-

pects: blogs that help explain criminal motivations, photographs of illegal activity, even posts by and to friends detailing where an individual was at a given time.

Russellville police used technology to try and development information for a case in which an adult man was trying to chat with an underage girl.

"We secured a search warrant and went into (the suspect's) e-mails to find some inappropriate messages that he had sent the victim," Lt. Scotty Lowery said.

Lowery said the case will be presented at an upcoming grand jury session for a possible indictment.

Florence police Deputy Chief Tony Logan said detectives were able to get information about a sex offender who had

been trying to attract a potential victim by going online and looking at profiles.

"We try to use the technology just like the bad guys; you have to," he said.

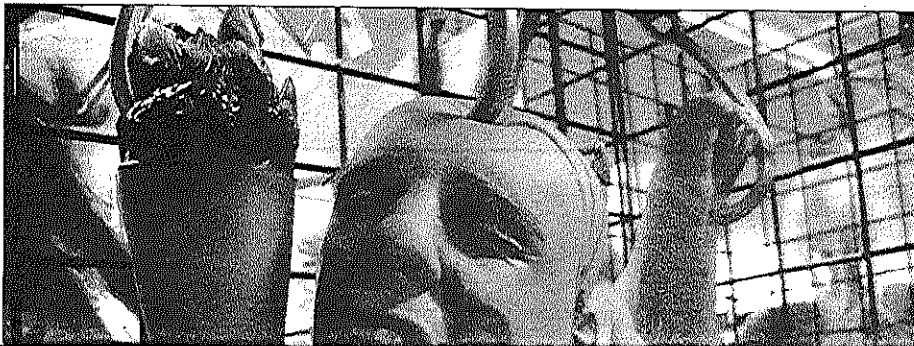
"Technology has outpaced the law," Lt. Charles Cohen, of the Indiana State Police, told a group of 200 police officers at a suburban Washington conference on the use of social networking Web sites for criminal investigations.

Law enforcement officers say using these social networking Web sites is another tool in the battle against crime.

Lowery said the Web sites are good ways to find background on suspects or on potential victims.

Please see Law, Page 6A

A FASCINATION WITH GORE



SHOALS PROFILE

Man enjoyed a memorable military career

By Tom Smith
Senior Staff Writer

CHEROKEE — Rayford Jeffrey had two aspirations in life when he was growing up.

"I wanted to be a doctor or a diesel mechanic," he said.

But after graduating from Colbert County High School in 1969, he

JDON

British newspaper finds subcontractor using child labor

ated Press

thing retailer Gap Inc. said that it will convene all of its suppliers to "forcefully" its prohibition on child labor after a British newspaper found children as young as 10 making Gap clothes at a sweatshop in New Delhi.

The Observer newspaper reported the children as saying they had been sold to the shop by their families in states such as Bihar and Bengal and would not be able to leave until they had paid that fee.

ne, working as long as 16 a day to hand-sew cloth-aid they were not being because their employer they were still trainees.

ysaid it first learned of the labor allegations last week discovered the sweatshop being run by a subcontractor at a vendor had hired in on of Gap's policies. The fact made there will be eyed so it cannot be sold

in Gap stores, company spokesman Bill Chandler said.

"We appreciate that the media identified this subcontractor, and we acted swiftly in this situation," Chandler told The Associated Press on Sunday. "Under no circumstances is it acceptable for children to produce or work on garments."

The Observer quoted one boy identified only as Jivaj as saying that child employees who cried or did not work hard enough were hit with a rubber pipe or had oily cloths stuffed into their mouths.

The paper said the sweatshop, or "derelict industrial unit," that it found during its investigation in New Delhi was "smeared in filth, the corridors flowing with excrement from a flooded toilet."

The Observer printed a photograph of one of the child workers, and British Broadcasting Corp. television broadcast what it said was footage of the youngsters taken at the sweatshop by an unidentified German TV crew.

Law enforcement using technology

Continued from 1A

"Some people will put their entire life story on their profiles, so it's there to check," he said.

Sheffield police Capt. Greg Ray said officers have used online social networks to check suspects for gang affiliation.

"We'll use every legal hook that we can, and I can see where this can be a useful tool for officers," added Muscle Shoals Police Chief Robert Evans.

Cops from all over the country caught up with the times at the Global Conference on Economic and High-Tech Crime in Arlington, Va., by learning how to collect evidence for investigations on suspects' profile pages.

Cohen loaded the MySpace page of a group that proclaims it hates cops as an example. If one of them goes so far as to kill a police officer, he said, this Web page can be used as proof of premeditation.

"The value of this information is that it shows intent to kill,"

he said. "This is the difference between lethal injection and life without parole or 30 years for murder."

Fans of detective thrillers will remember that the robber's role in a cops and robbers chase is to hide the trail he leaves behind. Why then are today's transgressors making their wrongdoings so public?

Sometimes the bragging is intentional. Michael Stefanone, assistant professor of communications at Buffalo University, studies the motivations for how people portray themselves online.

"If you boil away all of the technology and hype, just like 50 years ago, everybody more or less pursues attention," he said. "Attention is a form of social power."

Facebook started as a private network for college-age students, but has since opened up profile pages to Web searches and individuals not connected to universities. Users can control

whether to prevent this default access.

Unlike MySpace pages, which users often create under pseudonyms, Facebook profiles are connected to verifiable e-mail addresses and users tend to use their full names, sometimes disclose where they work and even where they live.

Private profiles are only visible to friends, but the term is used loosely in this context: A "friend" could be anybody the user allows to access the Web page, including an undercover cop.

Private profile pages and messages can be accessed by serving warrants and subpoenas on MySpace and Facebook for access.

The companies can then lock a user out from changing or closing an account, or simply provide authorities a copy of the Web page and associated links, photos and private messages at a given time.

Regularly checking Web profiles requires time and money. Cohen's department uses analysts who monitor Web sites of interest hourly.

And if a criminal fears she is being monitored, a few clicks of the mouse can delete information forever.

Cohen's presentation concluded with a look at Second Life, an online virtual world where users can purchase virtual goods with real money. Linden dollars, the currency of this virtual world, can be used for money laundering since they can be exchanged for U.S. dollars.

"This is the future," he said. So how will local authorities respond to crime in this virtual world?

Again, Cohen said, the law has not quite caught up: "This is something that has not been contemplated."

TimesDaily Senior Writer Tom Smith contributed to this report.

Researchers look at the allure of gore

Continued from 1A

the researchers that watching fictional horror gives people a sense of control.

But why would anyone pursue these images in the first place?

"We can't help it; we expect to die and we want to get a sneak preview of what it's like," speculates Tony Timpone, editor of Fangoria, a magazine dedicated to gore's special effects.

November's issue features a ripped-open arm with exposed tendons, a body-length wound of a frat guy split down the middle, three graphic decapitations, flesh-torn zombies and the after-effects of a crocodile attack.

For Timpone, the limits of gore are bookmarked between "cheesy" fakery and near realism.

"I don't even like to see in movies when a throat is slashed open and the blood comes gushing out. It's a little too real for me," Timpone said. "If it's a monster biting somebody's head off or somebody getting decapitated with an ax, it's a little more on the fantastic side; it's not quite as believable somehow."

Beyond scream fests at the local cinema, gore has also crept into the social conscience about

issues like war, for instance.

Beginning with the Vietnam War and civil rights movement in the 1960s to anti-abortion billboards and anti-meth ads more recently, several organizations have used gore as a vehicle for social change, said Mark Bernhard, assistant professor of history at Jackson State University in Mississippi.

For some, photographs of the victims of the Vietnam War opened up the field for modern portrayals of gore. One Vietnam war photographer, Tom Savini, later became one of the pioneers of 1980s anatomical realism effects, following from the 1960s sheep entrails of Herschell Gordon Lewis and the 1970s blood squibs of Dick Smith.

"After a childhood of make-believe and creatures and monsters, Vietnam was a lesson in anatomy. I felt a safety behind a camera looking at all the gore because in my mind it was special effects," said Savini, who now acts, directs and teaches special effects at the Douglas Education Center in Pennsylvania.

"Like stepping on an arm as I'm walking across a field. When

I looked at it, it wasn't shocking; it was a study of me looking at it and thinking: How would I create this as a special effect?"

Many researchers say that such fictionalizing real life gore may be a way of coping with horror when it becomes too real.

How gore is perceived also has a social aspect, according to Susan Burggraf, who researched gore's effects on people. In one study, people became more frightened and disgusted when they watched a horror movie alone rather than in a group. Plus, groups who watched slasher flicks tended to become more similar in their reactions.

"It matters who you're with," said Burggraf, chairwoman at Naropa University in Boulder, Colo.

"How come on the one hand disgust is supposed to be associated with removal, distancing and withdrawal and on the other hand, people seem to pay to get in touch with it?" said Clark McCauley, psychology professor at Bryn Mawr (Pa.) College, who has studied the psychology of disgust.

Like a roller coaster ride, people can enjoy the experience if they convince themselves of

their safety, he said.

In the past 10 years, researchers have begun studying the brain during times when it is dealing with images or other stimuli of disgust. A host of experiments has pointed to three interconnected areas in the brain that become activated by disgusting images, odors and thoughts, according to study results published in the forthcoming third edition of the "Handbook of Emotions," co-written by McCauley.

Gore will likely always titillate, as a deep part of human nature, researchers say. And there appears to be no age limits, especially at this time of year.

Halloween Express in Florence sells limb-lopped props, decapitated heads and gruesome-like costumes, including a butcher costume with a mask of fake skin patches stitched together supposedly from the victims. The costume based on the gore film series, "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre," comes in children's sizes.

Trevor Stokes can be reached at 740-5728 or trevor.stokes@timesdaily.com.



BIBLICAL INSIGHTS

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