

THE COMMODIFICATION OF VIOLENCE ON THE INTERNET:

An analysis of 166 websites containing
commodified violence

by Samuel Slater¹

ABSTRACT

The commodification of violence has occurred for centuries, even millennia. The simple fact is: violence is a highly popular, entertaining and profitable commodity. Normally, however, various formal and informal controls regulate the amount and extremity of such violence that is consumed. With the advent of the Internet, however, this has all changed. 'Bumfights', released in 2002 and only retailed online, is a popular 'underground' video that features graphic and dehumanising abuse of the homeless. Such a video signals a 21st century change in the commodification of violence. Now the term 'underground' does not denote its common meaning as the Internet – a global communications medium – allows the distribution and retailing of commodified violence that is not subjected to the strict formal and informal controls that regulate the offline world. Essentially, 'anything goes'.

This dissertation investigates this changed nature of the commodification of violence. A content analysis of 166 websites containing such violence was undertaken. This was to explore any themes and trends in the online violence market and allowed the establishment of 7 advertising and marketing typologies. A variety of potentially problematic trends were established. However, the method of governing these 'problems' is far from clear. This is due to the boundary-less nature of the Internet and the difficulty in establishing whether 'real' harms will occur from the growing popularity of this violence.

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Introduction

Aims and Structure of the Dissertation

The general aim of this dissertation is to investigate the growing availability and popularity in 'commodified violence' available on the Internet, to recognise any trends in this violence and to discuss any real or perceived effects it can have on society. The specific research question is: How easy is it to find violence that is commodified on the Internet, and how does this take place? In other words: are there a number of identifiable themes surrounding the commodification of violence on the Net². To explain this research aim, an introduction to the nature and concepts of 'commodified violence' and the 'Internet' (and their relationship) is given. This is followed by a critical literature review concerning the impact of the Internet on such violence and the implications for policing and control. Then the actual study will be presented and the findings discussed. Recommendations for future research will be suggested and the conclusion will emphasise key findings from the study (for a full glossary of terms see Appendix A).

Background to the Study

Violence is very prominent within society. It takes many forms and can be considered both legitimate and/or illegitimate. We are constantly bombarded with news stories informing us that violence and the perpetrators of violence are on the increase (Levi & Maguire, 2002). Much of this violence can indeed be considered undesirable and

² It is common practice to use the terms 'Internet' and 'Net' interchangeably. For a full glossary of terms see Appendix A.

harmful, and therefore cause for concern³. However, there are forms of violence within society that most people willingly interact with, encourage and even *enjoy*. Furthermore, such violence is so popular that it is commercially tradable and highly profitable, so much so that it has huge financial markets making it 'big-business'. The violence in question can be termed: 'commodified violence'. In other words, just like any commercial product, some forms of violence can be regarded as a 'commodity' for entertainment and profitable purposes. Such violence can be read in crime novels, played on a violent computer game, watched on cinema or television screens, listened to on the radio and even witnessed live at a boxing or martial arts match. Here, the concept of 'violence as commodity' or 'commodified violence' allows some violence to be regarded as legitimate, enjoyable and popular⁴.

It is important to note, however, that the concept of the 'commodification of violence' is not a new phenomenon but has occurred for thousands of years. Most Ancient Civilisations had some form/s of commodified violence. Ancient Greek and Roman cultures embraced violent spectator sports such as wrestling and Gladiatorial combat. Initially used for religious meaning and purpose, such games eventually developed to be enjoyed by the masses and frequently had combatants fighting to the death (Encarta Encyclopaedia, 2004). Indeed, by the 1st Century A.D. the Roman Gladiatorial games have been described as a 'national obsession', with the opening of the Colosseum involving 100 days of entertainment including the slaughter of 11,000 animals and contests between 10,000 gladiators (Encarta Encyclopaedia, 2004). Public torture and

³ Such as domestic violence, violence associated with anti-social behaviour, rape and murder.

⁴ This is generally due to the serious literary, artistic, sporting, political or scientific nature of some of it (such as news reporting or boxing), or the fictional or 'non-serious' nature of the rest (such as comedic violence on TV).

executions of criminals in the Middle-Ages in Britain were considered a public spectacle and were attended and enjoyed by many. This time also saw hunting and prize-fighting develop as popular entertainment and sport, with the remnants of such commodified violence within today's society and culture⁵.

This brief historical overview serves to highlight how the commodification of violence is a phenomenon that has existed for centuries. However, it is within the twentieth century that commodified violence became accessible to far more people than ever before. This is due to the development of mass media and Information Communications Technologies (ICTs). Here, ICTs such as cinematic movies, television, radio, video cassettes and the Internet (along with books and newspapers), make the commodification of violence easier and cheaper, and also distributable to far larger markets and audiences. It has even been said that the 'spectacle' of the executions of the past have become minor events 'compared to the executions (real or metaphoric) on the screens of modern television' (Mathieson 1997: 231, cited in Palmer, 2002: 97). Despite this, a range of formal and informal controls work to regulate the amount and extremity of commodified violence available in the mass media and ICTs⁶.

Formal controls are usually required by states and political institutions to regulate and control the *forms* and *extremity* of commodified violence available to the population (Dwyer & Stockbridge, 1999). In the UK, the British Board of Film Classification

⁵ Prize-fighting developed into boxing after the establishment of the 'Queensbury Rules' (Gunn & Ormerod, 1995), and hunting remains a topical issue.

⁶ Although these controls have not developed just to regulate violence, but also apply to other concerning commodities, such as 'sex'.

(BBFC), the Trading Standards Agency, and the British Video and Film Distribution Associations, regulate and certify⁷ motion pictures that enter the mainstream⁸ cinematic, retail and rental arenas. The Office of Communications (Ofcom) regulates the communications industries, with responsibilities across television and radio services. Books are subjected to the scrutiny of publishers, and music and videogames require certification and warning labels if the violence within the product is considered too graphic or extreme for certain consumers⁹.

However, informal controls also play a large part. Once a violent product is available, these controls determine whether a person *wants* to interact with such a product, and like formal controls, if they *can*. Parenting and educational institutions are particularly important informal regulators for children. Such regulation is also witnessed in the '9pm watershed' that television and radio broadcasters operate with regards to graphic sexual and violent content – with the more extreme content broadcast after 9pm. Also, the importance of friendship and peer groups must be emphasised as a form of such control. Both formal and informal controls, however, are socially and culturally specific and vary between all individuals, societies and cultures (Reiner, 2002).

Despite these controls, public concerns (within many societies and cultures) have, at times, focused on the increased availability and extremity of certain forms of commodified violence. Such concerns have scrutinised 'motion pictures in the 1920s,

⁷ Currently the certificates are U, PG, 12A, 15 and 18 (BBFC.co.uk).

⁸ The 'mainstream' arenas are those popular retail and rental outlets such as the 'high street'. Not 'underground' outlets or the Internet.

⁹ Commonly '15' or '18' certificates are used to prevent underage purchasing of films and games, as well as 'Parental Advisory: Explicit Lyrics' warnings for music CD's and Cassettes.

horror comics in the 1950s, television in the 1960s (and) cable television and video cassette recorders in the 1980s' (Canadian Department of Justice, 1996). However, with the advent of the Internet, there arrived a far-reaching ICT that's boundary-less and uncontrollable nature has been called 'anarchic' (Mann & Sutton, 1998: 205). Essentially, the Net creates an ideal of 'anything goes' due to the lack of an effective formal controlling system. The very nature of the Internet has undermined – to a great extent – the formal and informal controls used to regulate 'mainstream' commodified violence. Indeed, this has been witnessed in the rise of the video – only available for purchase online – called 'Bumfights'. This 'underground' video graphically depicts homeless individuals fighting and performing dangerous violent stunts and has been called 'abusive' and 'dehumanising' (Doward & Dean, 2004: 11). It is also considered to be the inspiration for a number of copycat incidents which exploit the Net in the same way (Doward & Dean, 2004). Bruce Hepton, the producer of a documentary (broadcast on a mainstream British television channel) focusing on the video, comments that 'The technology is... there for this sort of stuff to be disseminated around the globe. In our documentary, you don't see a tenth of the violence that goes on' (Doward & Dean, 2004: 11).

It seems that such a video signals a '21st Century' shift in the nature of the commodification of violence. Here, the Internet now plays a major part in *who* and *how* violence is commodified, and indeed the *types* of violence commodified. The many-to-many (Thomas & Loader, 2002) nature of the Net creates a marketplace which renders the established formal and informal controls – to a great extent – obsolete. Thus, the

controls which have been established for 'conventional' forms of media presentation such as television and film do not exist for the Web and materials such as 'Bumfights', points that are developed below.

Literature review

There is a distinct lack of literature that specifically focuses on the changing nature of the commodification of violence via the Internet. However, much literature is available that focuses on the Net's ability to change the nature of other activities (e.g. Mann & Sutton, 1998). Therefore, a broad discussion surrounding the general characteristics and potential impact of the Internet on deviant behaviour is given next. Then, the actual impact of the Net is discussed in relation to certain concerns and 'problems' and applied to commodified violence.

The Characteristics of the Internet and its Potential Impact on Behaviour

The Internet is a global network of interconnected computers. With a computer and Internet connection you are able to communicate with anyone else who also has access to these devices. You can share and download information, voice views and opinions in a 'WWW' web-site or news-group, and communicate to others via e-mail and Internet-relay chat (IRC).¹⁰ Or, in fact, combine a mixture of some or all of the above and much more (Mann & Sutton, 1998). It has been estimated that 1 billion users throughout the world are 'online' (Jewkes, 2003), all interacting across the medium of 'cyberspace'¹¹.

The opportunities the Internet provides have been described as 'truly magical' (Jewkes, 2003: 15). The global interconnectivity that cyberspace provides allows us,

¹⁰ See Appendix A for a full glossary of terms.

¹¹ 'Cyberspace' is a term that is understood as: 'the non-physical place which comprises the whole Internet system' (Mann & Sutton, 1998: 203).

to “connect” with like-minded individuals and groups, forming communities and alliances with others on the basis of shared interests rather than geographical proximity; we can enter worlds previously unknown to us and partake in events and experiences in contexts far removed from our own... And we can do all this with far less fear of surveillance, legal intervention or public retribution than would accompany such activities in other mediated spheres of life. (Jewkes, 2003: 15).

Clearly, the Internet provides an exciting opportunity for communication, information-exchange and interaction between people on a scale that no other ICT can provide. It has even been suggested that ‘By allowing a multitude of previously unconnected people to communicate easily with each other... the Net represent(s) a new and unparalleled social dimension’ (Mann & Sutton, 1998: 205). This ‘social dimension’ can be aptly named a ‘global village’, or, a global ‘community’ of shared interests and beliefs. The very nature of this new ‘social dimension’ gives it a wide variety of uses, from serious academic, artistic and political usage, to non-serious recreational and commercial usage (Spencer, 1999). It has even been charismatically described as ‘the last truly free means of information exchange in the Western world’ (Beam, 1996, as in Whine, 2002: 241).

Whilst the image of the Internet presented above suggests it to represent many of the best qualities of humankind, in reality, activities in cyberspace are free from the moral, ethical and legal controls that usually constrain our behaviour¹² (Jewkes, 2003). In cyberspace,

¹² As discussed in the Introduction.

groups and individuals often walk a fine line between freedom of expression and illegal activity (Thomas & Loader, 2002). Slouka (1996) argues that, 'Virtual systems, by offering us reality divorced from the world, from the limits and responsibilities of presence, offer us... a glimpse into an utterly amoral universe' (Slouka, 1996: 12). He goes on to suggest that, 'With the checks and the balances of the real world barred at the door, all the worst in human nature... (have) set up shop. What the planners (of the Internet) failed to reckon with, apparently, was the simple fact that freedom exists only within certain constraints, that morality matters only within the bounds of the physical world' (Slouka, 1996: 49). This slightly over-pessimistic view of people's use of the Net emphasizes the potential negative impacts cyberspace can have, as established formal and informal controls are lessened.

The arguments above highlight the potential the Internet offers for both good and bad behaviour – empowering the 'small person' with an Internet connection. They emphasise that the erosion of conventional formal political and legal controls in cyberspace can promote deviant behaviour. However, the Internet has not completely eroded effective informal controls such as moral standards, parenting, education, and peer groups. It is these controls that still fundamentally determine what a person does or does not want to do online, as in the 'real world'. Argument's such as Slouka's (1996) underemphasize the fact that people can simply choose to stay offline and not to become embroiled in the world of the Net, at least not the immoral, deviant world described. This idea is optimistically argued by Wall (2001a), who suggests that the anarchy that was predicted of the Net has not materialized, and that cyberspace is 'remarkably ordered considering

its sheer size in terms of the large numbers of individuals involved and also the breadth of their involvement' (Wall, 2001a: 167). Wall goes on to suggest that claims about the Internet have been exaggerated and that a structure of governance is steadily emerging to encourage order (ibid.).

Essentially, most people are not going to engage in immoral, deviant behaviour just because more avenues of opportunity have opened up for such behaviour. In fact, most of the activities that people engage in online are legitimate and desirable. Like previous ICTs, it seems that the Internet has developed through a succession of 'moral panics' (Cohen, 1973) involving 'knee-jerk response(s) from the media, policymakers, politicians, academics and the public alike' (Wall, 2001b). These panics exacerbate a little known, or indeed, actual 'problem' which is usually associated with technological change (Reiner, 2002). For some, the mere mention of the word 'Internet' can exact an irrational response that is full of fear (Chatterjee, 2001). However, it is also clear that many people do see the Internet as a place to commit deviant activities. Also, as there are no 'rules' in cyberspace, many people can engage in deviant behaviour which is uncharacteristic of their 'offline' behaviour (Demetriou & Silke, 2003 and DiMarco, 2003).

Essentially, the Net provides a wide range of 'new forms of markets in commodities and services' (Spencer, 1999: 242), where users are free from the morality of the 'physical world'. The very nature of the Internet makes 'Physical location and all the usual markers

of identity... irrelevant' (Jewkes, 2003: 15), whilst its boundary-less and uncontrollable nature is arguably 'anarchic' (Mann & Sutton, 1998: 205). This, therefore, makes it difficult 'to establish exactly who is regulating whom (and how) within the power-play that is currently taking place to control cyberspace' (Wall, 2001a: 167). Therefore, like most ICTs, the potential and actual impacts the Internet can have, can be both positive and negative. It is these characteristics that have allowed materials such as 'Bumfights' to be retailed online. The Internet is the only realistic medium with which to trade commodified violence that is restricted offline.

The Actual Impact of the Internet on Deviant Behaviour and Commodified Violence

Due to the nature of the Net, the actual impacts it can have vary widely. Concerns surrounding illegal and harmful content (Akdeniz, 2001), hate crime/far-right extremism (Whine, 2000), pornography (Akdeniz, 1997, and Chatterjee, 2001) and abusive images of children (Akdeniz, 1997 & 2001), are constantly brought to the public's attention; and many have outlasted a moral panic status. There is no doubt that some concerns are taken very seriously. For example, paedophile activity online resulted in the high-profile global police operation in 2001 to smash the so-called 'Wonderland Club', one of the biggest Internet paedophile rings yet discovered (Jewkes, 2003)¹³. Whilst 'Operation Ore'¹⁴ used credit card details obtained from web-sites to investigate 250,000 suspected Internet paedophiles (BBC News Online, 2002). This resulted in the discovery of 6,000 suspects and 1,300 arrests from the joint UK and USA policing initiative (BBC News Online,

¹³ This resulted in the 'arrest of 107 people and the seizure of around 750,000 computer images of children' (Jewkes, 2003: 21).

¹⁴ The UK section of the huge American enquiry codenamed: 'Operation Candyman'.

2003). However, these responses emphasise the Net's lack of an effective formal controlling system which allows and encourages the proliferation of these 'cybercrimes' (Burden et. al., 2003). Problematic 'cybercrimes' have, in fact, been categorized into: 'obscenity, trespass, theft and violence' (Wall, 1998b: 81). Importantly, however, 'each group represents a range of *activities* rather than actual *offences*' (ibid. Emphasis added). 'Cyberobscenity' and 'Cyberviolence' represent the potential and actual 'cyber-crimes' that the above activities and commodified violence can be categorized into¹⁵.

'Cyberobscenity' is the publication of obscene and explicit materials on the Net (ibid.). Commodified violence published online, like 'Bumfights', would fall within this category. However, it is not generally argued that this type of activity is problematic on its own¹⁶. It is even suggested that the moral 'panickyness' (Jewkes, 2003: 17) surrounding cyberobscenity is far more problematic for society than the actual 'obscene' articles available. This 'panickyness' can encourage unnecessary policy changes (Wall, 2001b), allow failures in distinguishing between *potential* and *actual* harms (Jewkes, 2003), and can encourage regulation that tramples on freedom of speech and expression (Evans, 2001). In fact, ironically, the 'problem' of online pornography is considered to be one of the major factors in developing the Internet as an electronic service (Wall, 2001b and Chaterjee, 2001). The huge market for the 'virtual sex-trade not only pioneered the virtual transaction, but it also demonstrated the commercial potential of the Internet to the normally constructive business community' (Wall, 2001b: 6). In fact, the emergence of

¹⁵ It is considered unnecessary and irrelevant to discuss in detail 'Cybertheft' and 'Cybertrespass' due to time and space constraints of this dissertation.

¹⁶ Although concerns mainly surround children's access to obscene articles.

commodified violence online mimics (to an extent), pornography online. In this sense, due to the control and censoring of these products offline, new commercial markets have opened on the Net which can retail the censored products very effectively. This is clearly witnessed with 'Bumfights', which sold over 300,000 copies (Doward & Dean, 2004).

'Cyberviolence' describes the 'violent impact of the cyberactivities of another upon an individual or a social or political grouping. Whilst such activities do not have to have a direct physical manifestation, the victim nevertheless feels the violence of the act and can bear long-term psychological scars as a consequence' (Wall, 1998b: 81). Here, when combined with cyberobscenity, it becomes clear that certain articles can harmfully impact people through their *creation* and *publication* on the Net. The abuse of the homeless for 'Bumfights' emphasizes the harmful impacts that can occur through the creation of commodified violence. The harmful impacts of publishing such violence are witnessed in the many 'copy-cat' incidents that mimic 'Bumfights' (Doward & Dean, 2004). Further harms that have resulted in the publishing of commodified violence online are witnessed in David Copeland's (the 'Brick-Lane Bomber') attacks on ethnic minority and homosexual communities in 1999, killing four and injuring one hundred (Hopkins & Hall, 2000). Copeland created his bombs after accessing a website which gave the ingredients and instructions for bomb-making. The website's dissemination of such information can certainly be classed as a form of commodified violence and are clearly very harmful.

However, another example of the Net's impact on such violence is the attempt by 'Entertainment Network Inc.' (ENI) to broadcast the live execution of Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber, in 2001 (Docherty, 2001 and Scheeres, 2001). ENI wished to charge \$1.95 for entry to the website 'webcasting' the execution, as a result of demands from many Americans. This, essentially, would have turned the (lawful) killing of McVeigh into a 'pay-per-view' event no different from a high profile boxing match (Scheeres, 2001). Although the U.S. Government eventually blocked the webcast from occurring and any money raised was destined for charities (Docherty, 2001), broadcasting such a highly controversial action would surely have been unthinkable without the Net. However, unlike 'Bumfights', it is difficult to establish what 'harms' could have occurred from this cyberviolence/obscenity. This case emphasizes how real market forces can encourage this '21st Century' commodified violence to occur. However, with the number of ways violence can be commodified online, determining the problems of such violence is difficult to say the least.

In fact, varying moral codes and legal responses of the countries that have the Internet create further difficulties in defining and condemning cybercrimes and their 'problems' (Walker & Akdeniz, 1998, and Jewkes, 2003). For example, 'material that is considered mildly pornographic in the UK and Ireland may not be censored at all in Sweden or the Netherlands but may be subject to much stricter regulation in the Middle East' (Jewkes, 2003: 17). Walker and Akdeniz (1998) emphasise this fact, highlighting that,

While the German Government has political fears and sensitivities about the use of the Net by Neo-Nazis, the United Kingdom takes a more relaxed attitude to the dangers of racism but conversely has a long cultural tradition of repression towards the availability of sexually explicit material (Walker & Akdeniz, 1998: 7).

Therefore, the difficulty in establishing whether materials online are legal or illegal, harmful or obscene, and subsequently cause for concern, is apparent. This is incredibly important when considering the impact of online commodified violence as it is generally regarded as more socially and culturally acceptable.

It is clear that the established methods of control, regulation and policing used in the 'real' world, are inadequate for the online world (Davies, 1998). However, are we really free to offend others without consequence or shame in the 'abstract anarchy' (Slouka, 1996) of cyberspace? Wall (2001a & b) argues that there is, in fact, a mechanism operating in cyberspace which encourages order. Most writers in this area agree that this 'order' does, or should, revolve around a multi-tiered system of 'governance' which includes legal, political, commercial and individual involvement (Spencer, 1999; Wall, 2001a; Akdeniz, 2001 and Jewkes, 2003). Wall (2001b) suggests that this effective governance approach contains five levels: 'the Internet users themselves; the Internet Service Providers (ISPs); corporate security organisations; State-funded non-public police organisations, and State-funded public police organisations' (2001b: 171). This

need for 'governance' reflects a States' inability to legislate for national conditions. In fact, it is rightly argued that trying to enforce control using national legislation is 'futile' (Spencer, 1999: 244).

This 'futility' is emphasised by the use of the Obscene Publications Act (1959; 1964) to combat obscene materials online, such as pornography and abusive images of children. Under section 2(1), it is an illegal offence 'to publish an obscene article or to have an obscene article for publication for gain'¹⁷. This legislation was amended by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 ('CJPOA 1994') to bring the UK laws up-to-date with technological changes such as the Internet (Akdeniz, 1997). However, these old forms of legal regulation are too 'reliant upon tangibility in time and space' (Akdeniz, 1997: unpaginated). The very nature of the Net, the anonymity it provides to users (Armstrong & Forde, 2003) and the vast number of people online, makes policing such laws virtually impossible. Therefore a multi-tiered, multi-national governance approach is the most pragmatic and logical option to regulate and control the Net.

However, most writers, and governance approaches, emphasise the need to control 'established' concerns such as abusive images of children, hate and pornography online. They fail to recognize the problems that can be associated with the huge impact the Internet has on retailing materials such as commodified violence, which are generally regarded as more socially and culturally acceptable. It is the ability of the Net to undercut

¹⁷ 'Obscene' is covered under section 1(1) as: any article/s or part of an article 'such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances, to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it'.

current formal controls, and a governance approach that ignores such materials, that allows commodified violence to go unchecked. Therefore, online retailers can provide commodified violence that is more 'real', 'authentic', 'extreme' and 'exciting', such as 'Bumfights'. It is the market that sustains this commodified violence that can encourage increasing harms through the creation and publication of such materials. The trends of such violence will now be investigated in the study.

The Actual Study

Methodology

Primary research was undertaken for this dissertation, and the research uses both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Due to time constraints set, investigation into websites alone was deemed the most suitable method¹⁸. 166 websites have been selected as the sample for analysis (see Appendix C) and offer a wide variety of forms and themes of commodified violence. Due to the unpredictable changing of Internet addresses, Web page material, and site owners (Gossett & Byrne, 2002), it is important to note that all websites in the sample were accessed in February 2005. Therefore, any descriptions of websites given is correct as of this time.

Sample Selection

The search engine UK *Google*¹⁹ was used to locate the 166 websites that are the research sample. Such search engines work by providing the Internet user listings of possible sites, or 'hits', (with a brief description of the content of the site) relevant to a 'keyword search'. The 'keyword search' is usually a descriptive word or phrase ('search term') aimed at locating websites, or any online content, associated with it. For example, entering the term 'violence' may reveal a site offering commodified violence, alternatively, it may reveal an official Government site highlighting violence reduction initiatives or the home-page of a domestic violence counselling centre.

¹⁸ Investigation into other Internet capabilities such as: 'news-groups', 'Bulletin Board Systems' (BBS), 'web forums' and 'E-mail', was deemed beyond the scope of this dissertation and unreasonable to research.

¹⁹ www.google.co.uk

For this study, the search terms entered initially use the word 'violence' or 'violent' in association with another. This is followed by the use of 'random' searching, with search terms entered such as 'extreme' & 'fighting' (see Appendix B²⁰). These search styles are used to locate sites offering a whole range of themes and forms of violence. Also, as the amount of hits provided by *Google* often run into the thousands or millions²¹, suitable sites are only selected from the first 30 hits provided.

To be eligible for the sample, websites have to fit certain criteria. Firstly, they have to be of no serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value, and the commodities offered impossible, largely unavailable or distinctly difficult to obtain offline. This is to distinguish violence in the sample from 'mainstream' offline commodified violence. However, it is appreciated that this task is not entirely objective and some commodified violence within the sample may be available offline and considered 'mainstream' by some.

Secondly, the violent commodities offered have to be:

- *Literature* – such as books, magazines, e-zines (online magazines), and comics.
- *Film* – including videos, DVDs, online video clips and 'live video feeds'²².
- *Images* – including posters, photographs, pictures and illustrations.
- *Interactive Games* – such as computer or video games.
- *Music* – such as CDs, MP3s, downloadable music and musical lyrics.

²⁰ For a complete analysis of the search terms entered, the amount of hits offered and the subsequent websites selected, see Appendix A.

²¹ For example: the search term 'extreme violence' yielded 3, 250, 000 hits.

²² This is live video footage available through the website.

- *Clothes* – any clothing associated with violence.
- *Accessories* – such as weapons or instructions to participate in offline violence.

This allows trends in the most marketable and popular forms of commodified violence to be recognized.

Thirdly, if payment is required for entry into a site, it is deemed unsuitable for this non-funded study. Also, it could be suggested that requiring payment prevents access to a site for those people whose accessing could be considered harmful, such as children. Therefore, this can be regarded as an effective form of control and not necessary for study.

Data Analysis of the Sample

This study uses content analysis – which is an objective and systematic breakdown of a research sample (Bryman, 2001) – to analyze the websites. This also includes a deeper qualitative analysis of a handful of chosen websites²³. By using these methods, certain trends and themes in online commodified violence can be recognized, as well as an establishment of advertising and marketing typologies.

For the content analysis, a full range of questions are used to break down the sites (see Appendix C²⁴). These questions are designed to investigate the amount of online commodified violence available, the profitability of such violence and also the dangers of

²³ These websites are selected due to their features emphasizing key themes or ideas.

²⁴ Appendix C shows the specific questions asked for each website and how each website answered.

it²⁵. The qualitative analysis is used to highlight websites, or aspects of websites, which emphasise key points, such as the most problematic forms of commodified violence for governance. In particular, this analysis is used to emphasise key aspects of advertising and marketing typologies which will be established.

Ethics and Health & Safety.

It is important to note that this research requires the interaction (seeing, hearing and reading) with many forms of *potentially* harmful, extreme and illegal commodified violence. Therefore, to prevent any harmful or legal consequences for the author, the advertising of the content in 'extreme' websites content is accepted as true. This allows data analysis to be conducted without seeing, hearing or reading any problematic violence.

Methodological Limitations

In terms of research design, analysis of other capabilities of the Internet such as news-groups, BBS's or email, would allow a broader picture of Internet violence to be established which 'WWW' websites alone do not show. Also, the results this study gathers are not applicable to these areas of the Net. It is also recognized that the use of one search engine from one area of the world is unlikely to provide a sample that is representative of all websites that offer violence. This is due to the search engine only providing websites that are registered to it. Another potential problem is the method of sample selection. It can be argued that the search terms entered do not allow a wide enough range of websites to be selected. Here, important sites (or a number of sites)

²⁵ As in the research objectives set out in the Introduction.

which offer important themes, may be missed entirely, affecting the validity of the results.

In terms of research validity and reliability, another limitation that can be argued is the influence of researcher subjectivity. Here, deciding what constitutes violence of a 'serious literary, artistic, political or scientific nature'²⁶ is somewhat subjective. As is deciding what violent commodities are 'impossible, largely unavailable or distinctly difficult to obtain offline'²⁷. It may be the case that the researcher is unaware of legitimate offline retailers offering such violence. It seems important to highlight the characteristics of the author who is a white, male, 'middle-class', 'liberal' university student. Therefore, when assessing subjective concepts of the commodified violence in the sample, the author really only represents groups of a similar nature and accepts that he may not represent groups of a different nature.

There are a number of potential ways to conduct research on this subject. Deeper qualitative analysis of a handful of sites is one possibility. Alternatively, a wider ranging sample could be used for more quantitative analysis. However, it is important to stress that the aims of this research are to recognize trends in the online commodified violence market and to recognize any problematic aspects of these trends. With the limited time-scale available, it is believed that the chosen research style is most effective.

²⁶ See above – 'Sample Selection'.

²⁷ See above – 'Sample Selection'.

Findings

Country of Origin of Websites in the Sample

In the sample it is possible to determine 114 websites' (69% of the sample) country of origin²⁸. Of these, by far the vast majority originate from the USA (45%), followed by those websites from the UK (12%). The rest of the sites can be attributed to ten other countries around the world, although predominantly originating in Europe and other 'Western' countries; highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: The countries of origin of websites in the sample

Country of Origin	Percentage of sites (total number)
USA	45% (75)
UK	12% (20)
Germany	3% (5)
Australia	2% (3)
Canada	2% (3)
Japan	1.2% (2)
Philippines	0.6 (1)
France	0.6 (1)
Korea	0.6 (1)
Holland	0.6 (1)
Russia	0.6 (1)
Portugal	0.6 (1)
Unknown	31.2% (52)

Such a finding suggests an underlying trend for commodified violence being far more available and accessible within western societies such as the USA and Europe. This is highlighted by the absence of sites from China which has an estimated 120 million Internet users (Reuters, 2005). The lack of sites from China is most likely due to its adoption of one of the hardest-line approaches to Internet regulation and control (Jewkes,

²⁸ Four key tools were used to help identify this: domain name (for example, a website ending in '.co.uk' will be registered in the UK); Contact details (many sites offer contact details which could be attributed to a specific country); product shipping form (many sites offering products for sale provide addresses from where their goods are shipped from); and any other blatant features (such as flags, language, images and features which can only be attributed to a certain country).

2003: 30)²⁹. The formal controls adopted by China emphasise the ‘liberal’ approach to Internet governance adopted by western societies. Here, upholding civil liberties such as freedom of speech and expression (Walker & Akdeniz, 1998 and Wall, 1998a: 207) and the promotion of free business markets (Spencer, 1999 and Jobber and Fahy, 2003) are fundamental rights. Thus, a governance approach has to create an equal medium between these aspects. Therefore, due to the difficulty in establishing such a governance method, the ‘western’ markets for commodified violence are clearly able to exploit the Net.

The Most Popular Commodities to Represent Violence

The varying forms of commodified violence investigated are set out in the Methodology. The percentage of sites offering each violent commodity is given in Table 2:

Table 2: The varying popularity of forms of commodified violence online

Form of Commodity within website	Percentage of Websites (Total Number)
Images	48% (80)
Film	43% (71)
Literature	25% (41)
Music	13% (22)
Interactive Games	8% (14)
Clothes	7.8% (13)
Accessories	3% (5)
Variety of all above	9% (15)

The commodification of violence within ‘Film’ and ‘Images’ is most popular. This is most likely because such media forms can provide an increased sense of visual realism, which people desire (Reiner, 2002). The commodity of ‘Literature’ also appears relatively popular online as 25% of sites offer it. This too mimics wider societies’ enjoyment of literature such as violent books and stories.

²⁹ Here, ‘all ISPs have to register with the police and all Internet users must sign a declaration that they will not visit forbidden sites’ (Jewkes, 2003: 30).

Violent computer and videogames have received much recent negative media attention (Knight, 2005; ADL Online, 2002). However, 'Interactive Games' do not feature prominently in the sample of this study. This may suggest that the recent media attention has taken the form of a 'panic' due to a series of high-profile crimes being blamed on the offender's use of such games (Slater, 2003; BBC News online, 2004)³⁰. The least popular commodities with which to represent violence are split between 'Music', 'Clothes' and 'Accessories'. This too is unsurprising due to the lack of marketability of less visible forms of violence. Historically, violence has been commodified in visible media which provide a realistic violent experience for users without having to be involved in the actual violent act³¹. These findings, therefore, indicate that the markets for online commodified violence use the same media forms as the offline markets.

Other Characteristics of Websites Offering Commodified Violence

For this, the sample is assessed by: the extent of violent content in a website; how many sites provide 'links'³² to sites of similar content; what percentage of sites provide a warning of violent content upon entry³³; the percentage of sites with freely accessible violence; and the percentage of sites that have some means of making money³⁴. Table 3 highlights these results:

³⁰ The widely publicized shootings at Columbine High School, Colorado, USA, reported that the offenders were heavy users of violent computer games (Slater, 2003). Also, the murder, in the UK, of 14-year-old Stefan Pakeerah by 17-year-old Warren LeBlanc in February 2004 has been attributed to LeBlanc's obsession with the violent computer game 'Manhunt' (BBC News online, 2004). It originally passed the BBFC certification guidelines with an '18' certificate but is now no longer retailed by many UK stores, but is easily available online.

³¹ Such as Gladiatorial games through to television and film.

³² See Appendix A.

³³ A website 'Front Page' which makes someone clearly aware of violent content inside also constitutes a warning.

³⁴ All websites have either: a) violent commodities for sale: 72% (134 sites); b) Sponsors, who pay website owners for space on the site to advertise: 49% (81 sites); or, c) Both of the above or any other means: 21% (35 sites).

Table 3: Other characteristics of websites offering commodified violence.

Percentage of sites with exclusively violent content	65%
Percentage of sites that provide links to sites of similar content	55%
Percentage of sites that provide a warning of violent content within the site	34%
Percentage of sites that have freely accessible violent content	81%
Percentage of sites that have the potential to make money	100%

It is clear that commodified violence is easily available and accessible online with 81% of sites offering such violence for free, and 65% of sites having exclusively violent content. Over half of the websites provide links to other sites, maybe establishing retail networks. This may also show that many sites are owned by one person or group. Advertising and providing a link to another site owned by them may be a marketing strategy to encourage visitors to experience the full range of their violent commodities.

Surprisingly, *all* websites in the sample have some means of making money. It is the potential of the Internet for 'e-commerce' – the online trading of physical goods and 'intangibles such as information' (Timmers, 1998: Unpaginated) – that has clearly provided incentives for trading, or attempting to profit from, commodified violence unavailable offline. However, it is impossible to determine whether these sites are able to make a profit. 'Bumfights' may be an exception. Realistically, the market for this violence may be too small to sustain it and eventually many sites may cease to exist when it becomes too costly to keep the website online. However, it must also be noted that a large majority of sites also have freely available commodified violence. This may

indicate that some website owners may be attempting to determine what violence is most popular and therefore most profitable. However, this 'culture' of Internet trading may not be occurring at all. It can also be argued that many website owners may be publishing commodified violence online without any real profit motive.

34% of the websites in the sample provide a warning of the violence within the site. This may be considered an 'informal control' such as an '18' certification label, yet, does not prevent access. However, it is recognized that this limited form of governance may be part of the websites' marketing³⁵. With an effective warning, this can encourage some people to access the site that normally would not. A 'warning' can ironically promote a dare and advertise the site as an exciting, exhilarating and moving experience.

However, these findings only emphasise that there is a large amount of commodified violence available online, they do not show how these potential 'cyberobscurities' are at all problematic. In the sample, many types of commodified violence are recognized. It is important to note that these range from seemingly 'un-offensive' humorous animations or videogames, to more extreme violent commodities which graphically depict fighting, rape, even murder. Therefore, presenting any findings as representative of all commodified violence online is unrealistic. Thus, as only certain aspects seem to pose problems, typologies were devised to categorise and distinguish between commodified violence online and its potential problems.

³⁵ www.forcedexistence.org.

Advertising and Marketing Typologies of Online Commodified Violence

The sample of websites can be grouped into seven distinct typologies. These typologies are determined by the advertising and marketing of the violent content in a site. Here, it is acknowledged that some sites can overlap various typologies. However, the overriding theme of a website determines what category that site falls into. The typologies are presented with the least 'potentially problematic' first³⁶:

Humorous Violence

Websites fall into this category if they advertise, market, or include violence depicted as humorous. It is relatively simple for websites to be assigned to this category and they are easily recognizable. This category represented 7.3% (12 websites) of the sample.

This appears the least problematic typology due to the nature of the content in the sites. Most represent home videos of accidental violent acts (such as *bofunk.com/readmore.php?news_id=391*) or, animations or videogames with violence that aims to be funny (such as *HappyKipper.com*). Essentially, this typology represents commodified violence that could easily become available offline. However, it must also be noted that 'Bumfights' is advertised as the 'funniest, most entertaining video of all time' (*Bumfights.com*), which highlights the difficulty in establishing what is acceptable commodified violence when attempting to control such materials.

³⁶ For all specific examples given, the data from the website and all others are contained in Appendix C (Tables C.1-7).

Hateful Violence

Websites with commodified violence advertised and marketed as ‘hatred’ belong to this typology. This means that the violence within a site has to focus on certain ‘hated’ groups or objects. The majority of sites that fall into this category represent groups devoted to racism (such as *Stormfront.org*). This typology forms only a small minority of the sample (5%), with 8 sites.

Although it has been recognized previously (ADL online, 2002), instances of ‘problematic’ commodified racial violence do not appear common within this sample. The majority of the commodities in this typology come in the form of accessories for promoting racism (as in *Skinheadz.com* and *Stormfront.org*) and also literature and music (as in *Micetrap.net*). This group could therefore be considered to contain the least amount of commodified violence that can directly cause harm. However, the ‘message’ that these sites contain could equally be determined as harmful (Deirmenjan, 2000 and Whine, 2000). Some sites in this typology appear to incite violence towards certain groups, mainly ethnic minorities, through the message of the site (as in *Skinheadz.com* and *Stormfront.org*). However, having a message that encourages racial violence does not necessarily create such violence. Those who wish to visit such sites are, arguably, likely to already carry such prejudices and engage in such violence.

Animal Violence

Any site that depicts violence between or including animals is assigned this typology. For example, websites that provide film and images of cock fighting (such as

RagingRooster.com) are most popular in this typology, whilst sites depicting animal cruelty also feature (such as *PeopleKillingAnimals.com*). This group represents only a small percentage (5%) of the sample with only 8 sites.

This typology represents one of the most problematic for governance. Here, the website *RagingRooster.com* shows live footage of cock fighting – an illegal sport in the UK. However, this site originates from a state in the USA where currently the sport is legal. This is the same for the website *FightingTosa.com* which originates from South Korea. UK authorities have no jurisdictional control over these sites, yet this study has clearly shown that they are easily accessible in the UK. In fact, *RagingRooster.com* is online to campaign against the increased pressure to make this sport illegal in its State of origin. It is the impact of these impending formal controls that have made the Internet the only realistic medium from which to publish this commodified violence. Such a theme may see an increase in animal cruelty commodified for Internet publishing.

Anarchist Violence

Sites in this typology have commodified violence that glorifies civil disorder and lawlessness. For a website to enter this category it has to intend or support anarchy or disorder, which also includes encouragement of 'violence for violence sake'. In this sample only 5.4% (9 sites) has this type of violent content.

Websites in this typology represent some of the sample that can be considered the most harmful and dangerous. Many of these sites contain commodified violence that can

actively encourage illegitimate offline violence. Websites fall into this category if they retail products such as illegal or illicit weapons and accessories, or, provide instructions for violent activities or bomb-making.

Here, the website *Anarchist-Cookbook.com* provides details of bomb-making and other instructions for violence and disorder. It is sites such as these that allow individuals like David Copeland to create home-made bombs and violently impact on many people's lives. Although most people will do nothing at all after interacting with these websites, they can certainly be considered within the most problematic due to the minority of website visitors who *may* use these instructions and 'incentives' for violent anarchy.

In fact, *The Big Book of Mischief*³⁷, which is similar to the *Anarchist-Cookbok.com*, marvels at the numerous attempts by the U.S. Government to ban the site and imprison its owner. These governmental attempts to control the site highlight the problematic nature of regulating this typology. This is due to the requirement to uphold freedom of speech and expression. In this sense, much commodified anarchist violence, such as in 'heavy metal' rock music, can not realistically be censored (such as *BlackMetal.co.uk*).

Horrific Violence

For websites to belong to this typology, they must advertise or market themselves as being 'dark' or 'disturbed'. Thus focusing on extreme violent acts of an 'evil' or 'gory' nature, aimed at emotionally unsettling website visitors. Websites offering this type of commodified violence surprisingly represent 37% (62 sites) of the sample. This typology

³⁷ www.ripco.net/download/text/e-texts/tbbom/

offers some of the most 'extreme' and 'disturbing' forms of commodified violence available.

*Ultra Violent Magazine*³⁸ retails a magazine featuring 'Horror and Exploitation Cinema'. Such a magazine cannot be regarded as problematic as it focuses on fictional horror films. However, this website offers an interesting insight into the retailing of online commodified violence. The website describes how due to the extreme nature of the magazine, its availability would be limited offline. It explains how the offline retailing of the magazine would have to be through a 'variety of underground establishments and independent store owners' (www.uvmagazine.com/wholesale). This highlights that for such materials, the Internet offers the only realistic retail outlet. In fact, retailing this magazine online means its potential market and profit are larger.

Other sites contain graphic visual incidents of horror, such as: murder and human mutilation, wounding and torture. Sites such as *Rotten.com*, *Ogrish.com* and *ForcedExistence.com* have incredibly graphic violent content. *Ogrish.com* contains 'uncensored events including: beheading videos, execution images and accident pictures', whilst *ForcedExistence.com* advertises its content using the tag-line: 'Sick Shit Your Evil Soul Craves'. *Rotten.com* markets itself as the 'soft white underbelly of the net, eviscerated for all to see'. This site collects images and information from 'a range of sources to present the viewer with a truly unpleasant experience' (www.rotten.com). One of the key marketing trends of these sites is that their content is 'horrifically' real, authentic, highly disturbing and only available online. The 'front page' of

³⁸ www.uvmagazine.com

ForcedExistence.com provides a statement surrounding the owners' profiting from such extreme violence:

The "main stream" frowns on the way I choose to live, yet they are creating an entire generation that is oblivious to the fact that others have the right to pursue their dreams as they see fit. They want you to think, talk, and act as they do, and if you don't they beat you down, both mentally, and physically becoming the very thing they're fighting. I say fuck them, and fuck the world!
No one but you should be in control over your life.
(www.forcedexistence.com).

Sites such as *ForcedExistence.com* and *Rotten.com* clearly glorify real acts of horrific violence³⁹. However, it seems difficult to determine where any harms result from the availability of this violence. Although possible, it seems that this typology is unlikely to encourage people to engage in the commodification of incredibly extreme and horrific violence just to publish such material online. In fact, *Ogrish.com* highlights that all the content included in the site is 'exclusively newsworthy stories and images' (www.ogrish.com), therefore, taken from legitimate sources. It appears difficult to establish where 'real' physical harms can occur as a result of this typology.

However, what must be considered is the continual debate surrounding the harms that can occur to those vulnerable individuals, such as children, who interact with

³⁹ In fact, *Rotten.com* marvels at legal attempts to control its content in the 'Legal Department' section of its site.

such violence. Obviously, the controls used for offline violence attempt to prevent people such as children from viewing these highly disturbing images. However, they are freely available and accessible online. This theme has received extensive debate surrounding the actual impact of seeing commodified violence and being emotionally or psychologically disturbed by it; the results of which are far from conclusive (Hall, 1980; Jack, 1994; Brown, 1996; Dwyer & Stockbridge, 1999; and, Reiner, 2002).

Sexual Violence

Websites with violent content designed to give sexual gratification are assigned to this typology. This includes *any* form of violence aimed at giving sexual gratification (such as *ExtremeCatFighting.com*). However, the majority of sites that belong to this category are those that depict rape (such as *SnuffX.com* and *ViolentComix.com*). This typology represents 7.3% (12 websites) of the sample. However, the violent pornographic market usually requires users to pay to access their sites. Therefore, the small number of sites in this category does not represent an overall figure of all rape sites available (see Appendix B).

Like Horrific Violence, the problematic aspects of this typology are those sites that claim to have authentic content, with visual media featuring 'real' rape, asphyxia and necrophilia. It seems that there is a market desire to have, or appear to have, real and authentic content of this nature, as in *SnuffX.com*. In fact, *SnuffX.com* plays on the 'urban crime legend' of the 'snuff film' which alleges that,

Film, videotapes, and... Internet webcasts of *real* murders, usually sex-related murders, circulate in underground social networks and markets. Most versions of this legend include some profit motive attached to these recordings and to the violent actions of the film makers (Donovan, 2002: 194. Emphasis added).

Sites like *SnuffX.com*, therefore, use this crime legend to promote their site. The problem with this typology is determining whether the content within the sites is actually genuine images or footage of real rapes and sex-related violent crimes. If so, then it is likely that the online market for this violence may encourage more of this material to be created, which is highly problematic.

However, it may be that such content is comparable to the 'Video Nasties' phenomenon witnessed in the early 1980s. Video Nasties were never clearly defined, but were usually home-made or banned, sexual or horror videos. Like the Internet now, they 'reflected concern about an unregulated medium, accessible to all' (BBFC, 2005: Unpaginated), in this case, video recorders. It was concern over the authenticity of these videos that caused a media panic and 60 titles to be prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act (BBFC, 2005). This suggests that an argument over the authenticity of this online violence may reflect such a panic, as realistically no-one was harmed in the making of such commodified violence.

Combat Violence

Sites depicting combat between individuals or groups fall into this typology. Examples of individual combat are illegitimate wrestling (such as *BackyardWrestling.com*) and street fighting (such as *RealFight.com*). Examples of group combat include glorified war or military violence, and acts of terrorism (as in *Bumfights.com*). This category is the second most popular within the sample, with 19% (31 sites) offering this type of violence.

It is within this typology that 'Bumfights' can be categorized. In fact, the hardcore video 'Terrorists, Killers & Middle Eastern Wackos'⁴⁰, an 'Official Bumfights DVD' (*Bumfights.com*), features extreme combat violence and claims to be the 'gnarliest hardcore video in existence' (*ibid.*). This video highlights the existence of a sustainable market for commodified violence featuring graphic and 'extreme' images that are marketed as the 'sickest ever put to film' (*ibid.*). Such violence is only retail-able on the Net and highlights the inability of established formal and informal controls to regulate such material.

Although the availability of these 'cyberobscenities' may not be problematic for society, other aspects of the typology can certainly be considered so. Such problems are highlighted by the proliferation of many amateur wrestling sites within the sample like *BackyardWrestling.com*. These sites mainly involve young males imitating extreme forms of 'legitimate' wrestling available on mainstream television⁴¹. Although those involved are likely to be willing participants, there is a real threat to their physical health

⁴⁰ Which contains: 'smuggled video of executions, firing squads, amputations, suicide bombings, gangland slayings, knife fights... hostage killings, and terror attacks.' (*Bumfights.com*).

⁴¹ Such as: World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) and World Championship Wrestling (WCW).

due to the extreme nature of their acts. The ability to publish this material online means the apparent financial and/or peer assessed benefits for these young men may encourage other young males to engage in these acts.

The most potentially problematic aspect of this typology are those sites such as *RealFight.com* and *CrazyWhiteBoys.com* who buy, or attempt to buy, 'authentic' commodified violence from website visitors. It appears that they then sell this footage from their website⁴². The U.S. website *RealFight.com* will buy 'video footage of real street brawls, gang footage, ultimate fighting/fight club style video, extreme wrestling, girls wrestling, girls mud wrestling, or anything else really outrageous' (www.realfight.com). Importantly, they will pay up to \$US1000 for such footage, which highlights the incredible profitability of such violence.

CrazyWhiteBoys.com are 'always looking for footage of... cool fights, crazy stunts an (*sic*) just all round crazy white boy shit' (www.crazywhiteboys.com). They even add: 'If we like what you got... You get paid. If not. You don't. The better the shit, the better you get PAID. If not, you're not worthy, and you need to get your ass out there an (*sic*) hustle up some decent shit' (*ibid.*). These considerable financial enticements will surely encourage a minority of website visitors to actively seek violence they can commodify. This could result in further exploitation of vulnerable individuals who are predictably easy targets, as in 'Bumfights'. Or, the setting up of violence between willing participants for the cash incentive, like *BackyardWrestling.com*. Either way, these sites represent real problems for society and the governance of the Net.

⁴² Usually in the form of a video or DVD compilation of these violent video clips.

How Feasible are these Typologies?

It is acknowledged that devising these typologies is a somewhat subjective task. Sites may easily feature in more than one typology. In fact, some people may consider some sites to be in the *wrong* typology. Furthermore, by taking an approach that categorizes the *advertising* and *marketing* aspects of this violence, this may just signify the 'tip of the iceberg' by not delving further into this violence, or, in the right places. However, the systematic approach taken provides a categorical system that distinguishes between potentially harmful and obscene, legal and illegal forms of violence. Furthermore, it establishes what categories provide the most serious concerns for those who wish to regulate the Internet and protect society. Therefore, it offers prospects of an approach to regulation that does not attempt to control all forms of debatable content, only the most 'harmful'. Therefore, it is believed that this systematic breakdown of online commodified violence provides a highly feasible approach to recognizing and understanding any problems associated with such violence.

Discussion

Overview of the Findings

The findings from this research have emphasized that there is a proliferation of commodified violence on the Internet. This violence is far more extreme, varied and potentially harmful than any such violence offline. It appears that the forms of control used on the Internet are ineffective at regulating it. This has led to an online market either supplying or demanding violence that is, or appears, completely realistic, authentic, and genuine. This violence includes 'real' depictions of abuse such as rape, asphyxia, mutilation, torture and even death. It is clear that before the Internet, materials such as these would have had limited audiences. They most probably would have been distributed secretly, using small scale 'underground' retail outlets, or, through networks of friends and peer-groups. They may have taken the status of 'video nasty' or 'crime legend' (Donovan, 2002). Now, however, they are freely available and potentially profitable. However, whether or not their *availability* is cause for concern is debatable. The findings in the typologies have highlighted that other aspects of this violence seem to pose larger concerns for society.

What can, or needs to, be done?

Although it would be most effective at controlling this type of material, an approach similar to that adopted by China would be highly illogical in the western world. The use of offline formal controls mentioned in the Introduction would be another option to control these materials but, conversely, they have limited effect online. Therefore, a multi-tiered, multi-national governance approach seems the most pragmatic and logical

approach to regulate and control commodified violence (see Literature Review). However, as mentioned, governance and control of the Net is not an easy objective due to its huge and boundary-less nature, which this study has emphasised. Indeed, the majority of the websites in the sample originate from the USA.

For the most concerning aspects of this violence, official State-Policing would be a feasible option. However, a quick visit to the website of the National Hi-Tech Crime Unit (NHTCU), the UK's most visible face of cybercrime policing, highlights that its attention is firmly focused on combating online paedophilia, pornography and e-commerce crimes such as fraud (www.nhtcu.gov.uk). Therefore, without a media driven moral panic, the hesitancy on the part of state-controlled regulatory bodies to take action (Walker & Akdeniz, 1998) will remain. However, it has also been noted that such a panic may actually promote a violent sites' content, and therefore provide vast amounts of 'free' advertising and marketing (Purdham, 2004). This would provide further problems for regulatory authorities attempting any control.

The use of the Obscene Publications Act would be an unlikely and somewhat ineffective piece of legislation to combat this type of 'cybercrime' (see Literature Review). Although it may be used for sites in the UK, the socially and culturally specific definitions of 'obscene' and the varying countries this violence originates from, makes such legislation implausible to use and police (Akdeniz, 1997). Possibly, by relaxing these laws and allowing more extreme forms of commodified violence into the offline world, this may allow established 'mainstream' regulation to be used, which can control 'price, client

allocation (and) total-type-timing of supply' (Naylor, 2003: 86). However, these controls are still likely to ban certain articles meaning illegal or unregulated markets are still likely (Naylor, 2003).

It seems, therefore, that encouraging Internet users and corporate security agencies to regulate themselves online (Wall, 2001b) is the most plausible method to control commodified violence online. Due to the arguable anarchy of the Internet, the most cost-effective and efficient way of blocking commodified violence online comes from the home PC. Here, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) or search engines could be encouraged to block access to the most concerning sites as they with paedophile and bomb-making sites (Wall, 2001b). Maybe a system of technologies for the home PC, such as rating and filtering systems would be most appropriate. Ratings systems such as the Platform for Internet Content Selections (PICS) work by 'embedding electronic labels in web documents to vet their content before the computer displays them' (Akdeniz, 2001: 125). However, these software tools only work to prevent children, or anyone who does not own the specific computer, from accessing these materials. The adult market for commodified violence is still likely to remain for those who decide not to use this software. Also, critics of such software rating and filtering systems suggest that they breach human rights which explicitly protect freedom of speech and expression (Ellison, 1998; Docherty, 1998a & b; and Akdeniz, 2001). Here, by increasingly using such software, and by encouraging website access prevention, freedom of expression guarantees will be violated and 'fortress UK' may be established (Akdeniz, 2001: 132). Furthermore, freedom to trade on the exciting market of the Internet may be diminished.

This can 'only strengthen the ability of those in positions of power to silence those with whom they differ' (Evans, 2001: Unpaginated).

Governance could therefore take a more 'situational prevention' (Clarke & Eck, 2003) approach, which is becoming increasingly popular for controlling the Internet (Newman & Clarke, 2003). Similar to CCTV monitoring offline, an approach such as this would attempt to 'increase the efforts' and 'deny the benefits' for those who would commodify violence for an Internet market (ibid.). Obviously, 'situational prevention' would need to focus on the most problematic forms of commodified violence which have been suggested in this study. Here, a 'market reduction' approach which aims to reduce the opportunities to create this violence and prevent its dissemination online would be required. Unfortunately, this would yet again require methods of formal and informal governance to do this, the limitations of which have been recognised. However, the simple premise of this approach would surely allow the establishment of the most effective method of governance.

However, suggesting a need to govern this material may be somewhat 'panicky' as it is based on the *assumption* that more societal harms will occur as a result of this material being available. What must be noted is that the availability, promotion and encouragement of this violence may just be a 'passing fad', which is commonly associated with cybercrimes (Wall, 2001b: 179). This 'fad' may be mimicking a similar trend witnessed in the offline world. In this sense, the recent popularity of violent 'reality' TV shows such as MTV's 'Jackass' (which sees individuals performing

dangerous and violent 'real life' stunts) may be encouraging viewers to look to the Internet to find more extreme and graphic alternatives (Delgado, 2002). Therefore, like these TV shows the market for online commodified violence may falter as appeal for such violence is lost. This could see a natural reduction in the availability and accessibility of this violence online.

However, attempting to establish an effective method of governance for commodified violence online was not one of the key objectives of this study. This brief overview of possible methods for controlling this violence only serves to highlight the difficulties that face those who would attempt such control. It does not attempt to provide any definitive answers. In fact, by suggesting that this violence needs regulating at all is based on the *assumption* that increasing harms *could* happen. These assumptions may actually be more harmful than the violence itself as they can encourage regulation and control of a relatively socially and culturally accepted commodity. Clearly, further research is needed.

Recommendations for Future Research

The more we understand about what this violence is, who is retailing, and who is consuming it, the clearer a picture we get about its necessity for control. The typologies in this study provide a good base and framework for future research as they may be refined, and/or, further typologies established that this study did not.

Therefore, follow-up research needs to be conducted into the most problematic aspects that this study has recognised. Further content analyses are required to establish the

authenticity of the violence marketed as 'real'. If it is realised that the majority of this violence is fake, then it is most likely that attempts to control this material will be limited. If it is realised that this violence is actually authentic, further research must be conducted into how, why, and where such materials are created and how website owners acquire them. Interviewing website owners would be a necessity.

For those sites in the typology 'Combat Violence' that purchase commodified violence, what needs to be established is the actual amount of violence that these sites purchase from visitors and whether this encourages increasing offline violence. Clearly, further investigation into the usage of these sites and the consumers of this violence is required. Therefore, what must be established is where the market for this commodified violence lies. It may be that the market is too large to attempt any effective form of control, or, too small to require controlling. Also, any follow-up research must encompass the global picture of trends in this violence. This will allow comparisons to be drawn between the countries that offer such violence, as well as those that consume it. Here, investigation into other capabilities of the Internet, such as news-groups, must also be conducted. This will enable researchers to determine whether the trends discovered are only applicable to certain websites, or are further engrained in international, national, local, or other Internet cultures.

Conclusion

Throughout the world, commodified violence is both popular and profitable. Interacting with such violence can be an exciting, thrilling and fun experience. However, in the 'offline world' the majority of such violence is subjected to strict formal and informal controls⁴³ which regulate the amount and extremity of the commodified violence that is consumed. The results of this study highlight the anarchic nature of the Internet, however, where such regulation and control is unavailable, or at least distinctly lacking (Wall, 1998a).

Although this study is rather limited in its scope, it has highlighted some important themes in the '21st Century' commodification of violence. The findings highlight that the availability of commodified violence online undercuts current mainstream formal controls. Furthermore, the data show that much of the commodified violence available follows similar trends to such violence available offline. In this sense, it is within more 'liberal' western societies that this violence is more accessible. Also, the commodities which represent this violence use the same visual media forms that are popular offline. However, it is acknowledged that due to the 'culture' and 'nature' of the Net, these sites may in fact be unable to profit from this violence. Their 'clientele' may be very small, and possibly linked to trendy 'underground' scenes in the countries these sites originate from.

⁴³ Discussed in the Introduction.

However, there are certain aspects of the findings that do appear more problematic and have seemingly been ignored by those who wish to control and govern the Net. There is considerable cause for concern relating to those websites that advertise and market their violent products or websites as 'real' and 'authentic'. In fact, this study's advertising and marketing typologies have established that there is an online market desire for violence that is, or appears to be, real and authentic. Like 'Bumfights', this 'real' or 'authentic' violence could involve, or could result in, the abuse of vulnerable groups such as the homeless, ethnic minorities, women, children, and even animals. However, what appears most concerning is that some websites actively encourage offline violence to be commodified for a clearly lucrative Internet market. Websites such as *RealFight.com* are willing to pay \$US1000 for footage of violence. Not only does this highlight how profitable such violence is, it could also encourage some to actively participate in violence for this considerable financial incentive.

However, having highlighted the concerning nature of some of this violence, difficulty lies in determining the type of response that should be enacted to control it. In western societies, Internet governance usually focuses on 'cybercrimes' more prominent in media and wider public concerns, such as paedophilia and abusive images of children. Therefore, the consequences of this violence have to be – or have to appear to be – highly problematic before any response is enacted. Although harmful problems have already been witnessed, and there remains a potential for further harms, the likelihood of any more incidents such as these is debatable. Therefore, by suggesting that all forms of commodified violence online need controlling may be a symptom of the moral

'panicky'ness' that surrounds 'cyberobscenity' (Jewkes, 2003), and may encourage regulation that treads on civil liberties. Therefore, further research has been recommended to investigate the most potentially problematic aspects of this violence.

Although no answer to a clear-cut problem can be positively recognised, it seems that the more we understand about the *need* to control online commodified violence, the more we can determine *how* such control can be facilitated. Although some instances of abuse for profit may have been recognised, they may in fact be so rare as to not require extensive policing. Furthermore, the harms done to those who interact with such violence may be minimal, even undetectable. However, it is the minority of people that *may* be harmed as a result of this violence that makes follow-up research a necessity.

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Appendix A – A Full Glossary of Internet Terms

Bulletin Board Systems (BBS's) – A remote computer serving as an information and message-passing centre. Typically owned by an individual and accessed via an Internet connection.

Cyberactivities – The activities of an individual or group on, or surrounding, the Internet – in cyberspace.

Cybercrime – Descriptive phrase that signifies the occurrence of a harmful 'behaviour' that is somehow related to a computer. A term largely invented by the media.

Cyberobscenity – The publication or trading of 'obscene' materials within cyberspace (on the Internet).

Cyberspace – The non-physical place 'inside' computers, which includes the Internet system.

Cyberviolence – The violent impact of the cyberactivities of another upon an individual or a social or political grouping.

Downloading – Taking information from a computer, the Internet or a BBS.

E-mail – Electronic Mail. To receive E-mail you need an E-mail address which will have to be known by the sender.

E-Commerce – The trading of goods and intangibles such as information via the Internet. The conduct of buying and selling in the new environment of information technology.

Hyper-Links – Or simply a 'Link'. Links a hypertext file to another location or file; typically activated by clicking on a highlighted word or icon at a particular location on the computer screen. In websites, can link you to another page of the site, or to another location on the Internet system.

Home-Page (Front Page) - The home page is an index to other pages on that site that you can jump to by clicking an underlined hyperlink or an icon.

Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) – Technologies that allow increased communication and information processing. They can convert, store, protect, process, transmit, and retrieve information.

Internet – Is a public network open to large agencies, academic institutions, commercial companies and private individuals. Contains a variety of forms of interconnectivity: E-mail, newsgroups and the World Wide Web (WWW). All in the medium of 'cyberspace'.

Internet Relay Chat (IRC) – This Internet service allows instantaneous – ‘real time’ – communications. The participants can exchange computer files, including graphics.

Internet Service Providers (ISP) – These are either public or private bodies which offer the facility to others to gain access to Internet Communications Systems. In the UK, universities are served by the Joint Academic Network (JANET). ‘Private’ ISPs, e.g. America Online (AOL) and Demon, mainly market the Internet for commercial purposes with both business and private customers.

Links – See ‘Hyperlinks’.

Live Video Feeds – See ‘Real Audio/Video Systems’.

Net – See ‘Internet’.

News-groups – Databases of messages arranged by subject which constitute forums for discussion or dissemination. Rather than sending an e-mail to an individual it can be sent to a news-group for anyone interested in the subject to read.

Real-Audio/Video Systems – Include and allow live sound and image transmission through websites on the Internet.

Search Engine – A computer system able to search the Net for individuals, or specific words. Vitally important for finding information on the Internet.

Server – A computer system in a network that is shared by multiple users. It may refer to both the hardware and software (the entire computer system) or just the software that performs the service.

Sponsors – Purchase ‘space’ on a website to advertise their website or product.

Uniform Resource Locator (URL) - An Internet address (for example, <http://www.realfight.com/>), usually consisting of the access protocol (*http*), the domain name (*www.hmco.com*), and optionally the path to a file or resource residing on that server (*trade*).

Web Browser - The program that serves as your front end to the Web on the Internet. In order to view a site, you type its address (URL) into the browser's Location field; for example, www.computerlanguage.com, and the home page of that site is downloaded to you.

Website – A set of interconnected webpages, usually including a homepage, generally located on the same server and prepared and maintained as a collection of information by a person, group, or organization. To locate a website, you type its URL into your Web Browser, or locate it via a search engine or link from a news-group or BBS.

World Wide Web (WWW) – Web ‘pages’ from a vast library of diverse information. A vast collection of documents which may contain links to other related documents and can incorporate images and sound. Accessible via ‘browsers’ such as Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. The web pages are stored on a server computer which must be linked to the web through an ISP. Once linked, the pages can be stored and accessed anywhere throughout the world.

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Appendix B – Sample Selection and Raw Data

This Appendix shows the ‘search terms’ that were entered to locate the websites that are the research sample; the number of possible ‘hits’ to select suitable websites from; and the websites (that are the sample) that these search terms yielded.

The details of how this sample selection works are given in the Methodology section – ‘sample selection’ (p.16).

Only those ‘search terms’ that yielded websites suitable for the sample are included in this Appendix. Many more search terms were entered and investigated but did not yield suitable results (as highlighted on p.16).

This Appendix highlights that those websites in the typology ‘Sexual Violence’ are very unrepresentative of the potential websites in this typology, due to the number of ‘rape sites’ that require payment to access the site.

This Appendix also highlights how many different search terms can yield the same results. For research validity, websites that appear many times are only counted once, as indicated in Appendix C.

Search Term entered	Google 'Hits' given	Sites Acquired from first 30 'hits' on the first 3 pages of the search (the raw data)
Violence	39 000 000	('Google' sponsored link: Violence - Fantastic low prices here. Buy it. Sell it. Love it. eBay. www.ebay.co.uk)
Violence & images	8 540 000	http://www.ogrish.com/ http://www.acclaimimages.com/search_terms/violence.html
Extreme & violence	3 250 000	http://www.geocities.com/simesgreen/ev/ http://www.lazaruscorporation.co.uk/ http://www.extremeviolence.cjb.net/ http://www.mdickie.com/
Violence & bumfights	776	http://www.realfight.com/ http://www.bumfights.com
Violence & graphic	1 820 000	http://www.uselessjunk.com/
Violence & extreme	3 210 000	http://www.geocities.com/simesgreen/ev/
Violence & brutal	1 410 000	http://www.brutalviolence.com/
Violence & crazy	1 310 000	http://www.crazy-cards.com/violence/santa.html http://www.narcissisticabuse.com/
Violence & sick	1 730 000	http://www.forcedexistence.com/
Violence & fighting	4 220 000	http://www.mentalertnie.org/sickmovies_violence.shtml
Violence & film	5 560 000	http://www.cinemaxs.co.uk/
Violence & games	5 460 000	http://www.gamealbum.com/keyword/violence/
Violence & voyeur	191 000	http://www.pics-porn.org/rape/?rape+many 'pay for' rape sites
Violence & combat	2 780 000	http://www.gamevil.com/eng/violencecombat.html
Violence & humour	1 260 000	http://www.afunworld.com/animal-pictures/picture-587.htm http://www.lazaruscorporation.co.uk/ http://www.atomfilms.com/af/home/index.html http://www.verity.com.au/
Violence & funny	1 790 000	http://www.britain.tv/funnclips.shtml
Violence & anarchy	453 000	http://www.anarchymag.org/
Violence & rotten	593 000	http://www.rotten.com/ http://www.rotten-cotton.com/
Violence & snuff	147 000	http://www.darksites.net/ http://www.beardfreak.com/ http://www.braindamagefilms.com/
Violence & ultra	691 000	http://www.metal-observer.com/ http://www.horrorfind.com/
Violence & disgusting	300 000	http://www.bloody-disgusting.com/
Violence & dark	3 140 000	http://www.newdarkages.com/welcome.htm
Violence & horror	2 270 000	http://www.filmwizards.com/ http://www.horror.com/
Violence & strange	1 920 000	http://very.net/~nikolai/nasty/
Violence &	2 040 000	http://directory.google.com/Top/Adult/Death_and_Gore/

accidents		http://dir.thumbshots.net/Adult/Death_and_Gore/
Violence & executions	292 000	http://www.ww1-propaganda-cards.com/
Violence & brawls	38 000	http://www.realfight.com/
Violence & death	12 700 000	http://www.redstream.org/
Violence & torture	2 340 000	http://www.lazaruscorporation.co.uk/
Violent & people	6 700 000	http://www.violentshit.com/ http://www.acclaimimages.com/_gallery/_pages/0018-0309-1708-1125.html
Violent & films	1 590 000	http://www.cinemaxs.co.uk
Violent & uncensored	129 000	http://vongfongtalim.filtserver.com/12374.html http://www.headwound.com/ http://www.shock-o-rama.com/
Violent & pictures	2 880 000	http://www.sadistic-rape.com/ http://www.sexinwar.com/ 13 'pay for' rape sites
Violent & music	3 710 000	http://www.happykipper.com/
Violent & exploitation	735 000	http://www.uvmagazine.com/ http://www.cinemawasteland.com/ http://www.sexgoremutants.f9.co.uk/
Violent & horror	1 490 000	http://www.horror.com/ http://www.uvmagazine.com/ http://www.zenvirus.com/ http://www.xploitedcinema.com/ http://www.wild-side.com/
Violent & humour	815 000	http://www.joked.com/ http://www.heaven666.org/videos.php
Violent & funny	1 270 000	http://www.happykipper.com/noflash.php/IV__ http://www.bofunk.com/readmore.php?news_id=391
Violent & combat	1 450 000	http://www.gamealbum.com/keyword/violent/
Violent & ultra	597 000	http://www.uvmagazine.com/ http://www.gamealbum.com/keyword/ultra-violent/ http://www.xploitedcinema.com/ http://www.uvmagazine.com/ http://www.unearthlypossessions.com/ http://www.beatdownproductions.com/
Violent & stuff	2 120 000	http://www.elfrigo.org/flash/pong.htm
Violent & gore	502 000	http://www.darksites.net/ http://www.gorezone.net/ http://www.xasa.com/directorio/mozilla/Top/Adult/Death_and_Gore/ http://www.oobdoo.com/directory/Adult/DeathandGore/
Violent & comics	679 000	http://www.ape-law.com/evilmonkey/vmcomix.htm http://www.flameboycomics.com/ http://www.violentcomix.com/
Violent & cinema	677 000	http://www.uvmagazine.com/ http://www.lazaruscorporation.co.uk/ http://www.xploitedcinema.com/ http://www.bittercinema.com/ http://www.shock-o-rama.com/
Violent & celebrities	403 000	http://www.oobdoo.com/directory/Adult/DeathandGore/

Violent & vampire	281 000	http://www.fearfulfilms.com/ http://www.vampire-magazine.com/ http://www.vampiresamongus.com/ http://www.choronzon.com/ http://www.vampires.nu/
Violent & brutal	1 370 000	http://www.ogrish.com/ http://www.violentcomix.com/ 3 'pay for' rape sites
Violent & uncensored	125 000	http://vongfongtalim.filthserver.com/12374.html http://www.headwound.com/ http://www.shock-o-rama.com/
Violent & snuff	160 000	http://www.weirdandsexy.com/ http://www.cinemaxs.co.uk/ http://rapeporn.co.uk/
Violent & sex	3 730 000	http://adult.redclouds.com/presex/scream/
Violent & mutilation	152 000	http://www.weirdandsexy.com/
Violent & underground	1 030 000	http://www.metal-observer.com/
Violent & sleepy	199 000	http://www.weirdandsexy.com/ http://www.darksites.net/
Violent & panic	589 000	http://www.cinemaxs.co.uk/
Violent & atrocity	115 000	http://www.sexgoremutants.f9.co.uk/
Violent & games	3 140 000	http://www.gamealbum.com/keyword/violent/
Violent & fun	1 970 000	http://www.hellsheadbangers.com/
Violent & metal	1 370 000	http://www.milius-web.de/vf/ http://www.teratism666.com/
Violent & backyard	282 000	http://cbw-ontario.tripod.com/ http://violent-wrestling.tripod.com/id2.html
Violent & internet	4 900 000	http://topsites.afraid.org/violent_comix.html
Violent & adverts	190 000	http://www.uvmagazine.com/
Ultra & violent	625 000	http://www.uvmagazine.com/ http://www.xploitedcinema.com/ http://www.gamealbum.com/keyword/ultra-violent/
White & power & music	13 600 000	http://www.micetrap.net/ http://diehardrecords.net/Sub3/ http://www.freeyourmindproductions.com/ http://www.panzerfaust.com/ http://www.whitepowerrecords.com/
Music & nigger	179 000	http://www.whitepower.com/ http://www.micetrap.net/
Backyard & wrestling	454 000	http://www.backyardwrestling.com/ http://www.angelfire.com/md2/xbw/ http://www.hbdub.com/index.shtml http://www.xbwuk.com/ http://www.angelfire.com/ky/bwa/ http://backyardmania.tripod.com/ http://ww.bywf.friendpages.com/ http://www.cooldudesandhotbabes.com/
Extreme &	1 490 000	http://www.wextremew.com/

wrestling		http://www.angelfire.com/mi3/ewfwrestling/ http://www.goofball.com/INC20001130120230 http://www.ewm.itgo.com/ http://www.girlswithguns.org/
Violent & fetish	366 000	http://www.fetishbank.net/links/links-fetish-extreme.shtml 6 'pay for' rape sites
Rotten & extreme	411 000	http://www.rottenrecords.com/bios.php?artist=Damaged http://www.rotten.com/ http://www.infrarot.de/
Supreme & race	4 190 000	http://www.blackmetal.co.uk/
Resistance & records	2 430 000	http://www.resistance.com/
Animal & fighting	3 000 000	http://www.atourhands.com/ http://www.sabong.net.ph/ http://www.zocho.com/Animal_Fighting/
Real & fight	16 200 000	http://www.therealfightclub.co.uk/ http://www.realfight.com/
Real & fighting	10 600 000	http://www.realfighting.com/
See & fighting	13 800 000	http://www.ufcfightnews.com/ http://www.freefightingillustrated.com/
Fucking & sick & violence	189 000	http://www.forcedexistence.com/ http://www.darklyrics.com/
Bombs & fighting	1 160 000	http://www.audiosparx.com/sa/display/submain.cfm/sound_group_iid.1241/RequestTimeout.120
Unlicensed & fighting	76 700	http://www.fightnightthemovie.com/ http://www.royprettyboyshaw.com/
Uncensored & fighting	176 000	http://www.realfight.com/ http://www.blood-sports.net/
Uncensored & wrestling	154 000	http://wrestling.rubrieken.com/
Beheadings	223 000	http://www.politrix.org/
Cat & fighting	2 500 000	http://www.americancatfighting.com/ http://www.sluttywrestlers.com/?wm_login=ntpdsv
Dog & fighting	3 060 000	http://www.peoriahs.org/dogfighting2.htm http://www.fightingtosa.com/
Cock & fighting	555 000	http://www.ragingrooster.com/ http://webhome.idirect.com/~boweevil/philippinecocks.html
Animal & fighting & videos	280 000	http://www.combinedsafety.com/index.php/browse/training-fighting-videos/
Dark & sites	19 100 000	http://www.darksites.net/ http://www.darksites.com/ http://www.freddark.net/ http://www.horrorseek.com/
Extreme & hardcore & violence	277 000	http://www.live4metal.com/ http://www.vampire-magazine.com/ many 'pay for' rape sites
Fighting & games	10 100 000	http://www.theflashgames.com/Fighting_Games.html
Fucking & violent	964 000	http://www.sadistic-rape.com/ http://www.violentshit.com/ many 'pay for' rape sites
Cool & fighting	3 900 000	http://www.volny.cz/onlinegames/play-cool-fighting-games.html

Skinheads & white & power	57 500	http://www.skinheadz.com/ http://www.stormfront.org/ http://www.volkerbord.com/
Snuff & x & violence	50 800	http://www.snuffx.com/ http://www.darksites.net/ http://www.filmwizards.com/ http://x.imavision.fr/ http://www.ogrish.com/
Xxx & violence	890 000	http://www.mentalernie.org/ Many 'pay for' rape sites
Terrorist & killers	379 000	www.illmerch.com http://dvdbum3.d2x.biz/
Vampire & magazines	1 020 000	http://www.bloodfetish.com/ http://members.tripod.com/~VAMPQ/vampnews.html http://www.vampire-magazine.com/ http://www.vampires.com/
Torture & underground & sick	117 000	http://www.sickopath.com/ http://www.foreverunderground.com/ http://www.prolapserecords.com/
Funny & violent & sport & hurts	58 800	http://www.punchbaby.com/
Killing & animals	2 640 000	http://www.peoplekillinganimals.com/
Funny & animal & deaths	144 000	http://livingbeing.com/roadkill.htm
Sick & books	5 480 000	http://www.sickopath.com/
White & power & doom	1 080 000	http://www.resist.com/ http://www.alternativenation.net/
Dark & side	18 800 000	http://www.darklinks.com/ http://www.ebony.co.uk/darkside/ http://www.gothic.net/ http://www.darksideofthenet.com/
Street & fights	1 150 000	http://www.tv.org/fighting http://www.fightingarts.com/ http://www.broadstreetbully.com/
Ghetto & brawls	5 300	http://www.realfight.com/ http://www.oldgrish.com/
Exploited & people & violence	516 000	http://www.allthelyrics.com/
Killers & wackos	6 910	http://www.freefightingillustrated.com/ http://www.illmerch.com/
Crazy & white & boys	2 120 000	http://www.crazywhiteboys.com/
Riot & game	817 000	http://www.accessup.org/anime_e/Riot%2560game.html
Extreme & cat & fighting	486 000	http://www.extremecatfighting.com/
Extreme & Fighting	3 480 000	http://www.butokukai.com/EXTREME_CAGE_FIGHTING.html http://www.wrestlemlibu.com/video/ref.html
Bomb & making	4 750 000	http://www.ripco.net/download/text/e-texts/tbbom/ http://www.anarchist-cookbook.com/

Appendix C – Results of the Content Analysis of the Sample

The tables (C.1-7) in this Appendix are the results of the Content Analysis used to analyse the sample of websites for the study. Each of the following questions was investigated in each website. The results of which are given in the tables. The following pages provide a ‘Key’ to understanding the layout of the tables.

Question to be investigated in each Website:	Possible Answers Available
1. How is the violent content advertised and marketed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A1 = Anarchist – A2 = Animal – C = Combat – D = Horrific – H1 = Hateful – H2 = Humorous – V = Sexual – U = Unrecognisable – M = Mixture of all (See ‘Results’ for definitions of each group)
2. What violent commodities are available?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – F = Film – G = Games – I = Images – L = Literature – M = Music – A = Accessories – CI = Clothing – V = Variety of all (See ‘Methodology’ for definitions of each group)
3. Does this site have exclusively violent content?	For all these questions the answer is simply yes or no. Therefore, in the tables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes = ● – No = A blank space
4. Does this site provide a warning before before entering as to any violent content?	
5. Does this site have freely accessible violent content?	
6. Does this site directly retail violent commodities?	
7. Does this site have sponsors to sustain it?	
8. Does this site provide links to sites of similar content or nature?	
9. Does this site actively encourage ‘offline’ violence?	Countries are given their abbreviated initials, e.g. USA and UK . U = An unknown Country.
10. If determinable, what is the country of origin for this site?	

Appendix C

Key to understanding Tables' C.1 – 7.

Example Layout of Tables' C.1 – 7:

The table title

Table C.....: results of the content analysis of websites: www..... - to - www.....

Website	Question Number									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
www.websiteaddressgoeshere.com	A1	I	●		●	●			●	USA

↓
Address of website goes here

These questions are to analyse the website adjacent to them and are set out above (p. 68)

↓
Answer to question 1

↓
Answer to question 5

↓
Answer to question 10

(The relevant questions for these numbers are set out above, p. 68)

Table C.1 – The results of the content analysis of websites: <http://backyardmania.tripod.com/> - to - <http://www.angelfire.com/ky/bwa/>

Web Site	Question									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
http://backyardmania.tripod.com/	C	F/I	●		●	●	●			U
http://cbw-ontario.tripod.com/	C	F/I	●		●	●	●	●		Ca
http://diehardrecords.net/Sub3/	H1	M	●	●		●				USA
http://dir.thumbshots.net/Adult/Death_and_Gore/	D	V	●	●	●	●	●	●		U
http://directory.google.com/Top/Adult/Death_and_Gore/	D	V	●	●	●	●	●	●		U
http://dvdbum3.d2x.biz/	M	F				●	●	●		USA
http://livingbeing.com/roadkill.htm	A2	I		●	●	●	●	●		USA
http://members.fortunecity.com/usamakid/unreleased/	D	I	●	●	●		●	●		USA
http://members.tripod.com/~VAMPQ/vampnews.html	D	F/L	●	●	●	●	●			UK
http://topsites.afraid.org/violent_comix.html	V	F/I/L	●		●	●	●	●		USA
http://very.net/~nikolai/nasty/	D	L	●	●	●					U
http://violent-wrestling.tripod.com/id2.html	C	I	●		●		●	●		Ca
http://vongfongtalim.filthserver.com/12374.html	V	F/I/L	●	●	●	●	●	●		U
http://webhome.idirect.com/~boweevil/phillipinecocks.html	A2	F/I/L	●		●	●	●	●		Ph
http://wrestling.rubrieken.com/	C	V		●	●	●	●	●		Holl
http://www.1underground.com/	M	I			●	●	●	●		U
http://www.accessup.org/anime_e/Riot%2560game.html	A1	G	●		●	●	●			Jap
http://www.acclaimimages.com/search_terms/violence.html	M	I				●				Ca
http://www.afunworld.com/animal-pictures/picture-587.htm	H2	I/G/L				●	●	●		U
http://www.allthelyrics.com/	M	L			●		●	●		U
http://www.americancatfighting.com/	V	F/I	●	●	●	●	●	●		USA
http://www.anarchist-cookbook.com/	A1	L		●	●	●			●	USA
http://www.anarchymag.org/	A1	L			●	●		●	●	USA
http://www.angelfire.com/ky/bwa/	C	I	●		●	●	●			USA

Table C.2 – The results of the content analysis of websites: http://www.angelfire.com/md2/xbw/ - to - http://www.choronzon.com/										
Web Site	Question									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
http://www.angelfire.com/md2/xbw/	C	I/C/A	●		●	●	●			USA
http://www.angelfire.com/mi3/ewfwrestling/	C	F/I	●		●	●	●			USA
http://www.apelaw.com/evilmonkey/vmcomix.htm	H2	L/I			●					U
http://www.atomfilms.com/af/home/index.html	M	F			●	●	●			USA
http://www.atourhands.com/	A2	I		●	●	●				USA
http://www.backyardwrestling.com/	C	F/G	●	●		●	●			USA
http://www.beardfreak.com/	D	F/L	●		●		●			UK
http://www.beatdownproductions.com/	M	F/L	●	●	●	●		●		USA
http://www.bedeadd.com/	D	F/I/L		●	●	●	●	●		U
http://www.bittercinema.com/	D	L	●		●					UK
http://www.blackmetal.co.uk/	A1	M				●				UK
http://www.bloodfetish.com/	D	L/I			●	●		●		UK
http://www.blood-sports.net/	C	G	●		●	●	●			U
http://www.bloody-disgusting.com/	D	F/I/L	●		●	●	●	●		U
http://www.bofunk.com/readmore.php?news_id=391	H2	F/I			●		●	●		USA
http://www.braindamagefilms.com/	D	F/C	●			●		●		USA
http://www.britain.tv/funnclips.shtml	H2	F/I			●	●	●	●		UK
http://www.broadstreetbully.com/	C	F/I/G	●		●	●				USA
http://www.brutalviolence.com/	V	F/I	●			●				USA
http://www.bumfights.com/	C/H2	F/C	●		●	●			●	USA
http://www.butokukai.com/EXTREME_CAGE_FIGHTING.html	C	C/F/A	●			●				USA
http://www.cadaver.org/	D	F/I	●		●	●	●	●		USA
http://www.celebritymorgue.com/	D	I	●		●			●		USA
http://www.choronzon.com/	D	I/L		●	●			●		U

Table C.3 – The results of the content analysis of websites: <http://www.cinemawasteland.com/> - to - <http://www.fightnightthemovie.com/>

Website	Question									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
http://www.cinemawasteland.com/	D	F	●			●				USA
http://www.cinemaxs.co.uk/	D	L	●		●			●		UK
http://www.combinedsafety.com/index.php/browse/training-fighting-videos/	C	C/L/F	●			●			●	USA
http://www.cooldudesandhotbabes.com/	C	F	●		●	●	●	●		Au
http://www.corpseoftheweek.com/	D	I	●		●		●	●		U
http://www.crazy-cards.com/violence/santa.html	H2	G/I			●	●	●	●		USA
http://www.crazywhiteboys.com/	C	F/C	●		●	●			●	USA
http://www.crime-scene-photos.com/	D	I	●	●	●	●	●	●		U
http://www.crimethroughtime.com/	D	I/L	●	●	●	●		●		UK
http://www.darklinks.com/	D	V			●	●		●		U
http://www.darklyrics.com/	D	M/L	●		●		●	●		Rus
http://www.darksideofthenet.com/	D	F/L/I/C		●	●	●	●	●		U
http://www.darksites.com/	D	V			●	●	●	●		U
http://www.darksites.net/	D/V	V	●	●	●	●	●	●		U
http://www.ebony.co.uk/darkside/	D	L/I	●		●	●				UK
http://www.elfrigo.org/flash/pong.htm	H2	F	●		●					U
http://www.everwonder.com/david/worldofdeath/	D	F/I	●		●	●	●	●		USA
http://www.ewm.itgo.com/	C	I/F	●		●		●			USA
http://www.extremecatfighting.com/	C/V	F/I/C	●	●	●	●				USA
http://www.extremeviolence.cjb.net/	D	M	●	●	●	●	●			Ger
http://www.fearfulfilms.com/	D	F/L	●		●		●			U
http://www.fightingtosa.com/	A2	F/I	●		●	●			●	Kor
http://www.fightnightthemovie.com/	C	F	●			●				U

Table C.4 – The results of the content analysis of websites: <http://www.filmwizards.com/> - to - <http://www.horrorfind.com>

Website	Question									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
http://www.filmwizards.com/	D	F				●	●			USA
http://www.findadeath.com/	D	I/L	●		●	●				USA
http://www.flameboycomics.com/	D	L/I	●	●	●					U
http://www.forcedexistence.com/	D	I	●	●	●	●		●		USA
http://www.foreverunderground.com/	D	M/A	●		●	●				USA
http://www.freddark.net/	D	M/A			●	●		●		U
http://www.freefightingillustrated.com/	C	F	●			●	●	●		USA
http://www.freeyourmindproductions.com/	H1	M			●	●		●		USA
http://www.gamealbum.com/keyword/violence/	M	G			●	●				USA
http://www.gamevil.com/eng/violencecombat.html	H2	G				●	●			UK
http://www.geocities.com/bkdeadlysniper/DeathMain.html/	D	I	●		●		●			U
http://www.geocities.com/schoolgirlsadist/dreamypsychosis.html	V	I/M	●		●		●	●		U
http://www.geocities.com/simesgreen/ev/	H2	G	●		●		●			UK
http://www.girlswithguns.org/	C	F/L	●		●		●			USA
http://www.goofball.com/INC20001130120230	H2	I/L			●	●	●	●		U
http://www.goregasm.com/	V	I/F	●		●	●				U
http://www.gorezone.net/	D	F/L	●		●		●	●		UK
http://www.gothic.net/	D	L/I			●	●	●	●		U
http://www.happykipper.com/	H2	G			●		●			U
http://www.hbdub.com/index.shtml	C	F/I	●		●	●		●		USA
http://www.headwound.com/	D	I	●	●	●	●	●	●		U
http://www.heaven666.org/videos.php	V	F/I			●					U
http://www.hellsheadbangers.com/	D	M/C	●	●		●				USA
http://www.horrorfind.com/	D	V	●		●	●	●	●		U

Table C.5 – The results of the content analysis of websites: <http://www.horrorseek.com/> - to - <http://www.realfight.com/>

Website	Question									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
http://www.horrorseek.com/	D	V	●		●	●	●	●		U
http://www.illmerch.com	C	F/C	●			●	●			USA
http://www.infrarot.de/	D	M	●			●	●			Ger
http://www.joked.com/	H2	I/F			●					U
http://www.lazaruscorporation.co.uk/	D	I/L			●	●				UK
http://www.littlemidgets.com/	V	I/L/F/M		●	●		●			U
http://www.live4metal.com/	A1	M			●			●		UK
http://www.mdickie.com/	C	G	●		●					USA
http://www.meatoraccident.co.uk/	D	I	●	●	●	●	●	●		UK
http://www.mentalernie.org/sickmovies_violence.shtml	D	F		●	●		●	●		U
http://www.metal-observer.com/	A1	M	●		●	●	●	●		Ger
http://www.micetrap.net/	H1	M	●			●				USA
http://www.milius-web.de/vf/	D	M			●	●				Ger
http://www.newdarkages.com/welcome.htm	H2	F			●					Au
http://www.ogrish.com/	D	F/I/C	●	●	●	●	●	●		USA
http://www.oldgrish.com/	D	F/I	●		●	●				USA
http://www.oobdoo.com/directory/Adult/DeathandGore/	D	V	●	●	●	●	●	●		U
http://www.peoplekillinganimals.com/	A2	I/F/C		●	●	●		●		USA
http://www.politrix.org/	A1	F/I		●	●			●		USA
http://www.portaldapereba.hpg.ig.com.br/	D	F/I	●	●	●					Por
http://www.prolapserecords.com/	A1	M				●		●		Au
http://www.punchbaby.com/	M	F/I			●					U
http://www.ragingrooster.com/	A2	F	●		●					USA
http://www.realfight.com/	C	F	●			●			●	USA

Table C.6 – The results of the content analysis of websites: <http://www.realfighting.com> - to - <http://www.unearthlypossessions.com/>

Website	Question									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
http://www.realfighting.com/	C	F/L	●		●	●	●			USA
http://www.redstream.org/	M	M				●				USA
http://www.resistance.com/	H1	M	●		●	●		●		USA
http://www.ripco.net/download/text/e-texts/tbbom/	A1	L	●	●	●				●	USA
http://www.rotten.com/	D	F/I/C	●	●	●	●		●	●	USA
http://www.royprettyboyshaw.com/	C	L	●	●		●		●		UK
http://www.sabong.net.ph/	A2	F/I	●		●	●	●	●		Ph
http://www.satansempire.net/	D	F/I	●	●	●		●	●		Ger
http://www.sexgoremotants.f9.co.uk/	D	F	●	●		●		●		UK
http://www.sexstump.com/	M	I		●	●	●		●		USA
http://www.shock-o-rama.com/	D	F	●			●	●	●		USA
http://www.skinheadz.com/	H1	V	●		●	●			●	USA
http://www.sluttywrestlers.com/?wm_login=ntpdsv	V/C	F/I		●		●				U
http://www.smyw.com/	D	I			●		●	●		USA
http://www.snuffx.com/	D	I		●	●	●	●	●	●	U
http://www.spydercorner.org/	D	I	●	●	●			●		U
http://www.stormfront.org/	H1	V	●		●	●		●		USA
http://www.teratism666.com/	D/H1	M	●	●	●	●		●		USA
http://www.thanatos.net/	D	I	●		●			●		USA
http://www.theflashgames.com/Fighting_Games.html	C	G			●	●		●		USA
http://www.therealfightclub.co.uk/	C	A	●			●			●	UK
http://www.tv.org/fighting	C	F				●				USA
http://www.ufcfightnews.com/	C	V	●		●	●	●			USA
http://www.unearthlypossessions.com/	D	M	●	●		●		●		USA

Table C.7 – The results of the content analysis of websites: <http://www.uselessjunk.com/> - to – <http://x.imavision.fr/>

Website	Question									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
http://www.uselessjunk.com/	M	F/I			●		●	●		USA
http://www.uvmagazine.com/	D	L/I	●			●		●		USA
http://www.vampire-magazine.com/	V/D	M/L	●	●	●	●				U
http://www.vampires.com/	V/D	L/I	●	●	●	●	●	●		UK
http://www.vampires.nu/	V/D	L/I			●	●	●	●		U
http://www.vampiresamongus.com/	V/D	L/I		●	●	●		●		USA
http://www.violentcomix.com/	V	L	●	●	●	●		●		Jap
http://www.violentshit.com/	V	F/I	●		●	●	●	●		U
http://www.volny.cz/onlinegames/play-cool-fighting-games.html	C	G		●	●	●	●	●		U
http://www.weirdandsexy.com/	V	F/I		●	●	●	●	●		U
http://www.weirdpicturearchive.com/humans.html/	M	I		●	●		●	●	●	U
http://www.wextremew.com/	C/V	F/I	●	●	●	●				USA
http://www.whitepower.com/	H1	M	●		●	●		●		USA
http://www.whitepowerrecords.com/	H1	V				●		●		USA
http://www.worldofgore.com/	D	I	●	●	●		●	●		U
http://www.woundgallery.com/	D	I	●	●	●	●		●	●	USA
http://www.wrestlemlibu.com/video/ref.html	C	F	●		●	●				USA
http://www.xasa.com/directorio/mozilla/Top/Adult/Death_and_Gore/	D	V	●	●	●	●	●	●		U
http://www.xbwuk.com/	C	I	●		●		●			UK
http://www.xploitedcinema.com/	D/C	L/F	●			●		●		USA
http://www.zenvirus.com/	M	L			●					U
http://www.zocho.com/Animal_Fighting/	A2	V			●		●	●		U
http://x.imavision.fr/	V	F	●		●					Fr