

# THE CYBERBULLY WHO WANTED TO SCARE THE PRINCESS AWAY

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Section 27A of the Telecommunications Ordinance, Chapter 106 of the Laws of Hong Kong is concerned with “*unauthorized access to computer by telecommunications*”, and is as follows:

- (1) “*Any person who, by telecommunications, knowingly causes a computer to perform any function to obtain unauthorized access to any program or data held in a computer commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 4 (that is, \$25,000).*”<sup>1</sup>

The first known case of someone breaking this law was a young individual who was convicted of this offence in 1995. The intruder used the computer account belonging to the father’s workplace and gained unauthorized access to a number of websites, and went on a hacking spree. The hacking activity finally came to an end after being discovered by a local internet service provider. The police from the Commercial Crimes Bureau took on the case, and a raid in a residential home led to the arrest of the hacker.<sup>2</sup> This is not fiction, but it does sound like a spy movie.

A few years back, a Princess was sent by a King to visit a few famous cities. The Princess had a mission: the King had ordered her to bring friendship to the citizens of the cities she was going to visit. The Princess was young and energetic. Hong Kong was her first stop. Out of curiosity, the Princess went bar hopping at Lan Kwai Fong, and got into trouble. The King was furious after learning that her darling daughter was not keeping up with royal protocol and

demanded that she should return to the royal palace at once. The Princess then promised she would be good, and her father the King finally gave her a chance to continue her journey.

In fact, the Princess was created for a shopping website. The Princess is fictitious. In the fiction, both the King and the Princess lived on a planet somewhere far away from the Earth.

In one chilling evening, it was discovered the website hosting the Princess was hacked. The storyline for the Princess was changed, certain words were substituted with horrific and intimidating words. The owner of the website felt intimidated and was depressed seeing his website having been defaced.

If the horrifying incident was investigated, no doubt, it wouldn’t be too difficult to locate the culprit. Moreover, the hacker had left traces of evidence that the authorities would love to follow and to apprehend him if the incident was reported.

Was the hacking done by some freelance hacker who had nothing better to do than damage a website belonging to someone the hacker didn’t know? Or was the hacking done by someone who had the access to the website?

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If it was the naughty job of the person who had access to the website, it must have been intentional on his part, because the owner of the website would not have authorized someone to deface his own website?

The hacker didn't have to target the website hosting the Princess to break the law; he could have chosen at random any website to wreak havoc. The hacker is not required to have the intention to target at any particular program or data in order for the law under Section 27A of the Telecommunications Ordinance to be broken. Subsection (2) of Section 27A of the Ordinance states:

*“For the purposes of subsection (1) –*

- (a) *The intent of the person need not be directed at*
- (i) any particular program or data;*
  - (ii) a program or data of a particular kind; or*
  - (iii) a program or data held in a particular computer...”*<sup>3</sup>

Whoever the hacker was, he was forgiven by the website owner. Well, aren't we all taught to forgive others for their wrongdoings? The King forgave the Princess and she was given a chance!

*“Research indicates computer hackers may exhibit individual traits associated with certain personality disorders. For example, some computer hackers may be prone to higher rates of hostility and exhibit a greater propensity for egotistical qualities... In addition, computer criminal deviants may exhibit a lack of empathy, insincerity, dishonesty, and enhanced intellect, all of which are consistent with Antisocial Personality Disorder, as individuals with the disorder do not believe their actions cause harm to others or break the law...”*<sup>4</sup> Simply put, the hacker of the website was sick.

Can a hacker also be a cyberbully? Yes, of course. *“(The) factor most often associated with this type of cyber deviance (that is, cyberbullying) is achievement” or “the motivation to enhance power, to dominate, and a desire to provoke and annoy...This need for power and achievement may be related to the higher levels of narcissism, specifically the traits entitlement and superiority, which indirectly effect cyberbullying...”*<sup>5</sup>

It appears the hacker of the website had all the traits of a cyberbully, showing his superiority in computer skills, provoking and annoying the owner of the website, disregarding others' feelings, and caring less whether he had broken the law.

The defacement of the website left an irreparable scar on the aspirations of the website owner. Nevertheless, consequent to the hacking of the website, the Princess survived. She later landed in Europe and went on a shopping spree.

Who created the Princess? Give it a guess.

## References:

1. HK e-Legislation, [elegislation.gov.hk](http://elegislation.gov.hk)
2. Rynson Lau, Kwok-Yan Lam & Siu-Leung Cheung, The Failure of Anti-Hacking Legislation: a Hong Kong Perspective, In Proceedings of ACM Conference on Computer and Communications Security (March, 1996)
3. HK e-Legislation, [elegislation.gov.hk](http://elegislation.gov.hk)
4. Kathryn C. Seigfried-Spellar & Kellin N. Treadway, The University of Alabama, Differentiating Hackers, Identity Thieves, Cyberbullies, and Virus Writers by College Major and Individual Difference, Deviant Behavior (2014)
5. Ditto