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October 23, 2008

bin Laden hacked?

Posted: 01:03 PM ET

Permalink | 148 Comments

UPDATE FROM OCTAVIA: *Thanks for the comments about the hacking vs. domain registration expiration. This is definitely a valid point. Our focus here is not to write a technical essay about hacking. It's merely an attempt at showing how some people – we don't know who – are fighting al Qaeda by attacking their websites. Al-Ekhlaas website has been down for months following years of operation. While today it redirects you to joker.com, tomorrow it might redirect you to another site. While we do not know who is hacking into the jihadi websites, there is no doubt they're being hacked.*

'Al-Ekhlass' A website where many of al Qaeda's jihadist messages are posted is offline, having been replaced with the domain joker.com.

How do we know that?

On the jihadi sites that work, it is common practice to announce that "Site X has been downed by evil forces but we're working on bringing it back up." Or "Site Y was hacked but you can join us temporarily on this address." To the dismay of the jihadist community and its supporters, the Al-Ekhlaas website has been downed/hacked/disabled – you choose the terminology that works for you. From the chatter about it, this doesn't seem like this is a domain registration problem. Al-Ekhlaas has been on line uninterrupted for a long time. This is the first time it disappears abruptly and can't

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get back on.

———————

Octavia Nasr | BIO
CNN senior editor for Arab affairs

A hacking war is raging on Jihadi websites. Radical Islamist sites have been attacking and getting attacked for quite some time. The website hacking practice was common in 2001 and 2002… Following the 9/11 attacks when al Qaeda used only one website to communicate its messages to supporters and foes alike. That website was called alneda.com. It was getting constantly hacked… sometimes several hackings a day. After every hacking the site managed to resurface on the net until it disappeared from the scene in 2004 to be replaced by other websites — What started as one al Qaeda-linked site mushroomed into dozens which branched out into hundreds of supporting sites that serve as dissemination centers over the internet.

Two well-known al Qaeda-linked sites are Al-Hesbah and Al-Ekhlaas. Al-Hesbah is the oldest and requires a username and password to access it. Its membership was open to the public in 2004 but became restricted over the years. This site became known as the first venue for uploaded al Qaeda messages — from Osama bin Laden video messages to statements and claims of responsibilities for attacks carried out in Afghanistan, Iraq or even Europe. Al-Ekhlaas followed with a sleeker image, and more technical bells and whistles.

The hacking war works both ways.
There are documented cases of extremist groups hacking into local websites that disagree with their messages. One case that drew the attention of western media took place about a month ago when a Sunni group hacked into the site of Shiite Iraqi Cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. The group posted a Bill Maher clip making fun of an edict the cleric had made concerning a sexual subject. The group's claim was that the cleric and his edicts are bringing shame to Islam and giving a good reason for the west to laugh at the Islamic religion.

Shortly before September of 2008, al Qaeda watchers started speculating about the next al Qaeda message which they expected to be released around the 9/11 anniversary — a practice al Qaeda and its video arm, As-Sahab, have been consistent about. The message never came partly because those websites were hacked into and completely disabled at times.

Today Al-Ekhlaas is off line, having been replaced with the domain joker.com. Trying to go to their site, you get a message saying that "this domain was registered with Joker.com."

Al-Hesbah and a few other al Qaeda-linked sites remain in operation, not because they escaped hacking, but because they manage to resurrect themselves under different names and continue to post messages mainly from al Qaeda enthusiasts. So the drop in al Qaeda-released videos is evident, the lack of messages from al Qaeda leadership is obvious. What is not obvious is whether al Qaeda has decided to slow down production and release of videos or the hacking is so severe and pointed that it paralyzed the media activity of the terror group.

148 Comments

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148 Comments

Cindy October 23rd, 2008 1:07 pm ET
Who really cares! The less web-sites to carry al Qaeda's crap the better! I wish

Why Chinese American
cabinent nomination
Vaccines sickening sol
Political campaigns an
The Shot: Water fight
Sorry Bill Richardson:
wanted to Hillary
Autism linked to vaccir
Please throw in anothe
Morning Buzz: A Miracl
Love the victims, loathe
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Candy Crowley
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David Gergen is CNN's
analyst and former presi

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winning journalist and A

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they would all get kicked off line!

Cindy..Ga.

Jim October 23rd, 2008 1:31 pm ET
If the Hackers can get into the sites shouldn't they also be able to write programs that will tell exactly where the computer of origin is located so we can drop a bomb & take the terrorists out ? We have spent Billions on technology & cannot get these guys

Ken October 23rd, 2008 1:37 pm ET
either that or they just forgot to renew the domain….

Good October 23rd, 2008 1:39 pm ET
I say put our computer hackers in a room with free roam of the internet. Kick these guys off the web. Do not just hack their sites, these guys should start uploading spam software and tracking software so we can see were it is coming from.

Dan October 23rd, 2008 1:40 pm ET
Hacked by Joker.com? I find it hard to fathom why a DOMAIN REGISTRAR would be going around 'hacking' anyone's web sites. Maybe they just haven't set up their web servers yet

anonymous October 23rd, 2008 1:41 pm ET
I like how the public loves hackers when they are fighting evil such as this, and no charges are ever pressed, but if someone sees Sarah Palins email, or takes down a cult website…. you want to put them in jail….

make up your mind!

DeeJay October 23rd, 2008 1:42 pm ET
A rare example where minimized internet security has turned into a relief, really!

Al T. October 23rd, 2008 1:43 pm ET
Uh, just because it says it is registered to Joker.com does not mean it was hacked by people working at Joker.com.

In fact, it doesn't even necessarily mean anyone "hacked it". Their domain name might have lapsed and it might have been purchased by someone else.

Or, even more mundane, they might have changed their server settings and haven't got things set up correctly yet.

This article shows a lot of lack of familiarity with the technical details and makes a lot of assumptions. Not very hard-hitting.

Joanne, Syracuse, NY October 23rd, 2008 1:43 pm ET
If hacking can be good for the USA, keep hacking.

Lena- Phoenix, AZ October 23rd, 2008 1:44 pm ET
The U.S. Govt. should unite all those people that are hacking into our emails, computers, and cell phones here in the U.S, (commiting identity theft). They can place a wanted ad, or a special job position, with a high reward or salary, for hackers that can get vital information against Al-Qaeda, . So that our hackers can be used for a good purpose-hacking into AL0Qaeda and getting Bin Laden's whereabouts-so that they can stop going after ordinary people's information.

Sam October 23rd, 2008 1:45 pm ET
It wasn't hacked by Joker.com… Joker.com is a domain registrar. Pay attention.

360° Radar
Beat 360°
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Crime & Punishment
Hillary Clinton
Economy
Erica Hill
Behind The Scenes
Sarah Palin
Maureen Miller
Global 360°
Polygamy
On TV

Archive

December 2008
November 2008
October 2008
September 2008
August 2008
July 2008
June 2008
May 2008
April 2008
March 2008
February 2008
January 2008

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Brandon
October 23rd, 2008 1:46 pm ET
Joker.com is just a domain registrar. You can go there to reserve whatever site names are available.

What likely happened is someone noticed that the domain name was expired and re-registered it for themselves using joker.

Hardly a hack and hardly perpetrated by joker.com.

Thomas Agent
October 23rd, 2008 1:50 pm ET
Good!!! Everyone should hack the hell out of those worthless, al Qaeda slime balls!!!

Adam
October 23rd, 2008 1:52 pm ET
It doesn't necessary look like it's been hacked. Maybe their domain registration expired and someone else swooped up and purchased it?

Shaun
October 23rd, 2008 1:52 pm ET
The US government should make a list of these websites & distribute it. Then givie out cash prizes to anyone who can disable these sites.

Patrick of Ohio
October 23rd, 2008 1:53 pm ET
Hahaha, even on the internet they have to hide. Osama bin Laden will die wracked with disease in a hole somewhere in a crap part of the world fearful until the last moments, before his kidneys die and his own excrement kills him, that the US will swat him like a fly. He can't have too much longer to go, he may even be dead all ready, may his corpse fester and rot.

Frank
October 23rd, 2008 1:54 pm ET
I'm glad someone is bringing the war to these pieces of crap. I wouldn't be surprised if goverments around the world aren't actively supporting these activities.

Keep them from communicating as much as possible. It would be nice if they were using the IP addys of the fools to goto this site to go after them. Can't say it sounds like a bad idea to me.

Marines
October 23rd, 2008 1:54 pm ET
Good job Jokes — we need to cut the means of communication for al Qaeda and the others.

John
October 23rd, 2008 1:56 pm ET
its about time hackers put thier skills to work for a good cause.

Jon
October 23rd, 2008 1:56 pm ET
Apparently, you're unaware of the difference between "domain hijacking" and a "hacked" website, so let me explain it for you:

A domain hijacking occurs when a person or organization registers a domain name (in this case, the domain name al-ekhlaas.com) that doesn't currently belong to them. This can happen legitimately in situations where a domain registration expires and the "hijacker" registers it in his own name immediately afterwards. This requires a degree of ignorance on the part of the previous owner, but it's not illegal or even difficult to do.

In some cases, ownership of a domain name is transferred before it expires, and without the consent of the previous owner, but this requires a great deal of effort and is generally done using illegal means (hacking an email account, for example, to pose as the legitimate owner).

visited 12/3/2008

A “hacked” website is one that has been accessed illegaly by an unauthorized user, and is generally defaced or taken down in the process. This is nearly always illegal and is tantamount to theft or larceny.

By confusing the terms, you’re leaving your readers to believe that the very core of the website has been removed or destroyed, when in fact the website is likely very much intact. The only thing that has changed is the owner of the domain name, and the server to which that domain name is pointed.

Joe the Moderate October 23rd, 2008 1:56 pm ET

Have no fear, “my friends,”.McCain says he “knows” exactly how to get bin Ladin. He just wants to wait until he’s the next Pres. to tell us his plan. “Country First” …..NOT!!

Obama/Biden ‘08

Kevin October 23rd, 2008 1:56 pm ET

So much for hacking Osama bin Laden, how about try WACKING him?!

Franky, Chicago IL October 23rd, 2008 1:58 pm ET

I know, with these high-tech, sophisticated and crazy computers, what can you not do? For crying out loud, you can even find out where a person send you a message with the IP address. Of course you gotta have the tools and software necessary to do it but overall, computers have improved. I’m not gonna lie but this is a form of Conservatism. Let’s face it, a computer is a personal, reliability and responsibility thing. You have the will and so forth to what you can look at or not. I’m not gonna lie but I want my government to do a better job with this. When I first found out about how so many millions of credit cards were hacked, that’s when I said that it went too far…

But if those Terrorists think they can hide, they have no idea who thery’re missing with. Well…except Robert E. Lee! LOL!!!

Eric October 23rd, 2008 1:58 pm ET

Joker.com is the domain registrar of alekhlaas.org. Someone got the login information for the user who registered the domain and deconfigured the DNS settings - this was not a hack.

Another possibility is that some governmental agency contacted joker and had the site delisted.

Barbara Tighe October 23rd, 2008 1:59 pm ET

What’s the world coming to when the most dangerous terrorist organization in the world is treated with such disrespect? Given the history of this organization I’m sure when they find out who allowed this to happen “some heads will roll.”

um October 23rd, 2008 1:59 pm ET

Actually, looks like they forgot to re-register their domain.

Kumar October 23rd, 2008 2:00 pm ET

Kumar here,

First I like my new name, second I agree that all al Qaeda sites should be hacked into oblivion.

Kumar out.

Colin Molyneux October 23rd, 2008 2:02 pm ET

Are they hacking the current financial war might be a good question.

visited 12/3/2008

Mike

October 23rd, 2008 2:06 pm ET

It is the responsibiliy of every freedom-loving, computer hacker to trash these sites wherever the appear!

Ron R

October 23rd, 2008 2:07 pm ET

Religious extremism is a double edged sword.
“You believe in things that you don’t understand and you suffer”
Stevie Wonder

We aren’t laughing at the Islamic religion, we respect religious freedom. We are laughing and crying at the clowns who think they know what is better for everbody. For a culture that gave us so much in antiquity, they have so little to offer now, only pain. Hopefully this segment of that wonderful society will implode and fall upon themselves.

Tim

October 23rd, 2008 2:08 pm ET

These guys surprise me. They reject everything of western making but have no problem using the technology we invented. Big hypocrites.
I’m betting most 12 year olds with an internet connection can hack into their angry little websites. Don’t be all jihadded up over western ways and then turn around and try to use them for your own looney cause.
These people are all so angry. I guess we would be too with that much sand in our undershortz. Sounds like a good place for our intelligence agencies to start tracking these whack jobs down.

Christopher

October 23rd, 2008 2:09 pm ET

Well that was the most interesting thing I’ve read on your site today. What would be more interesting is to know how much the American government pays the Jolt swilling kids that do this for them.

Pat

October 23rd, 2008 2:09 pm ET

an excellent insightfull article

Kelly, Victoria Canada

October 23rd, 2008 2:12 pm ET

This is terrific, but I don’t think we’re fighting them nearly at the capacity we could. There’s plenty of “average joe” computer specialists in the West (USA & Canada) that could easily jump on the bandwagon to wage cyberwar against the terrorists. After all, they happily kill our brave men and women, work diligently to hack our systems and glorify all of it in the name of an extremist branch of Islam straight out of the Dark Ages.

If these folks can do it from a laptop in a hovel somewhere in Afghanistan or Pakistan, why can’t we do it from a modern home in North America? Our education system dwarfs theirs and our population on a whole is significantly better skilled. That’s not even counting our best and brightest in our anti-cybercrime units and those of our allies.

I say what’s good for the goose is good for the gander. Shutting down their communications is vital to ultimately winning the war on terror.

Greg

October 23rd, 2008 2:13 pm ET

What idiot would be so stupid as to even try to access an al Qaeda website besides someone brainwashed enough to blow themselves up in the first place? Any sane individual would be too worried about the FBI or CIA to go to such a website… and when you say enthusiasts, are you talking potential terrorists, or the curious, knowledge-minded individuals researching the terrorist group?

Bill

October 23rd, 2008 2:13 pm ET

I am at least glad that this shows that there are some Islamic people that are

visited 12/3/2008

fighting the extremists also. However, I am still concerned that Muslims everywhere have not made enough of an effort to defend there religion against the extremists. The mainstream Muslim population and leaders should be the ones trying to delivery Bin Laden to us more than any military in the world and I do not see this happening.

If you go into a mosque and try to learn about the Muslim religion you are terrified by there treatment of women and there seeming edict that there religion is the only religion that can exist on this earth. These ideas have to change or we need to do something until these ideas are erradicted from this earth.

Rebecca Seattle-ish, WA October 23rd, 2008 2:16 pm ET
Cool! It goes both ways! I suddenly don't feel so back about Identity Theft… as long as it's not happening to me.

Tim October 23rd, 2008 2:17 pm ET
The democrats are all upset about his invasion of privacy.

Bob Kazak October 23rd, 2008 2:19 pm ET
Judging by their traffic charts it looks like we can rule out the use of a botnet to ddos the site. Really, neither site gets that much traffic anyways. The better of two Al-Ekhlaas has an Alexa rank of 300k. It really isn't like that the site gets more than 200 unique visitors a day. If that is a well known site that isn't saying very much. The way these sites are reported on it as if they have Alexa ranks of 20k and 5 thousand unique visitors daily.

Come on, if you made a blog about variants of cheese sandwiches and updated it daily. You would get more traffic than either of these websites.

Steve Wagnon October 23rd, 2008 2:20 pm ET
I never thought id say this but God bless those hackers

Keith October 23rd, 2008 2:21 pm ET
This is the way to disable al qaeda. Never mind an army of soldiers, just turn an army of computer nerds on them. Their global network would disintegrate.

rick October 23rd, 2008 2:21 pm ET
Why couldn't the CIA do this? or are they doing it?

DKage October 23rd, 2008 2:23 pm ET
A new weapon for a new war…

Rod Forx October 23rd, 2008 2:23 pm ET
Why doesn't the government just devote some computing power to DDoSing all of these sites as soon as they pop up? It's so simple and effective I have no idea why these sites even exist!

Craig October 23rd, 2008 2:26 pm ET
So, how is Bin Laden being hacked? It's not him in particular.

Erik October 23rd, 2008 2:27 pm ET
That's not a hack, that's a domain name registrar landing page. Joker.com is not a hacker, it's a business, like Network Solutions or GoDaddy.com. What probably happened is Al-Ekhlaas didn't pay their bill, and their domain got registered by someone else. This happens thousands of times a day.

This article is not news.

+charlez October 23rd, 2008 2:29 pm ET
Now if we could only "HACK" the terrorist's Bank Account's, look out baby I'm

visited 12/3/2008

getting rich, Moo Hah Hah .

anon October 23rd, 2008 2:31 pm ET
Jim - most websites are hosted on servers owned by a hosting service provider. Knowing the location of the web server will tell you nothing regarding their location if they aren't hosting it from their physical location.

Mohamad October 23rd, 2008 2:33 pm ET
Maybe joker.com hacked sarah palin's email…
this article was a waste of my time

Matt October 23rd, 2008 2:36 pm ET
Interesting the posters with the attitude "why can't we get these guys?" The fact is we are, have been, and will continue to kill al Qaeda. And Bin Laden, how long will it take for folks to start to accept that he is dead? (and has been for quite a while.)

Sentori October 23rd, 2008 2:38 pm ET
WoW! This is just wrong…how dare we the United States engage in such deceitful practices hacking into Bin Laden's email. What is this world coming to. We need the Democrats to protect Bin Laden against the evil repubs who might pass legislation allowing this sort of thing…shame on you repubs for trying to keep our country safe…shame, shame, shame on you. SO, do I sound enough like a liberal? Hope so…cause that is what you're going to get with a Dem in the WH and controlling congress. Heck, they might even give him a foreclosed house to help the market rebound…Anderson…good job at keeping them honest…putz!

Shawn October 23rd, 2008 2:40 pm ET
I'm sure everyone can agree that al-Qaeda must be opposed where they meet us; but the internet is not the place to take the war. It is wrong to steal data from other people (though this article is about hacking domain names), regardless of their intentions.

Fight for freedom for EVERYONE, not just a chosen few.

Jacobito October 23rd, 2008 2:41 pm ET
joker.com is a domain registrar, i think they forgot to renew their registration.

Morgan, from Whittier, CA October 23rd, 2008 2:42 pm ET
LMAO!! I think I would have a blast hacking Bin Laden's site. Think of the possibilites; recepes, directions on knitting, best seller books.

Personally, I applaud the hackers who go after those pigs! Death to Al Queida and all those radical pigs!!!

Harry Ballsack October 23rd, 2008 2:44 pm ET
Or, just maybe they are too busy running from cave to cave to make any videos.

wally October 23rd, 2008 2:45 pm ET
its really important that we know where they talk and listen in. we will only win against evil, if we are smart not emotional. by just "shutting down" the websites we lose a valuable source of information about their mindset at a specific point in time.

flossmore October 23rd, 2008 2:48 pm ET
Good….hack the hell out of these lowlife pieces of crap…there's only one good kind of Islamist…..a dead one!

Big Bill from Brooklyn October 23rd, 2008 2:48 pm ET
Who cares? Leave the terrorists in their caves to be tracked down by our soldiers and destroyed.

Annie Kate October 23rd, 2008 2:49 pm ET

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Its almost poetic justice isn't it? The big bad terrorists get hacked on the web and can't safeguard their media outlets; some would term what the hackers do as computer terrorism. So now the shoe is on the other foot. Hopefully, the hackers will continue to bedevil them - this is one group that deserves to be hacked.

Annie Kate
Birmingham AL

Shane

October 23rd, 2008 2:51 pm ET

anonymous said:
I like how the public loves hackers when they are fighting evil such as this, and no charges are ever pressed, but if someone sees Sarah Palins email, or takes down a cult website…. you want to put them in jail….

make up your mind!

The major difference is that it's not a risk to OUR National Security. Someone coming and looking at a political persons information, could be a terrorist or stalker, and then we could end up with something far worse than 9/11. Think about it, would you care more if someone hacked YOUR email, or a neighbor down the street? I don't think you would care about the other person. That's the difference from the hacking of the Terrorists (neighbor) & the US (you).

Tom

October 23rd, 2008 2:52 pm ET

If the Bushies can intercept and read all the email and phone calls of everyone in the USA, coming and going, why can't they locate the messages of Alquida , locate the computer and bomb them into oblivion? They can only spy on us, not them???

Connie

October 23rd, 2008 2:54 pm ET

If you think the government DOES NOT know where Bin Laden is then you're sadly mistaken. How can we pinpoint locations of some things on earth (from space no less) and not others? Probably look for BinLaden to pop up sometime in January, let's say a day or two before the new President is sworn on. Just an observation!

Negar

October 23rd, 2008 2:54 pm ET

we should ask mccain where osama is ,apparently as he mentioned in the debate he knows where he is!lolol
i hate fundamentalists!They make the world worse and worse everyday….

Phi

October 23rd, 2008 2:57 pm ET

For all the people wondering why we don't trace IP addresses and cary out assaults based on that, it is because A) IP addresses are easily faked (google onion servers like tor) and B) people posting to and hosting these sites are located all over the world, not just in Afghanistan/Iraq. Despite what many Americans seem to think, we do not have jurisdiction outside of our borders.

chris

October 23rd, 2008 2:57 pm ET

Come on give us all the names and let us have at it……

GaneeshTheGreat

October 23rd, 2008 2:58 pm ET

Unfortunately, very few people who use a computer on the Internet realize what website "hacking" or conducting network reconnaissance actually conists of.

A web server that hosts a website is not neccesarily located even in the same country as the authors of the site. A computers MAC addresss can be easily modified with software found on the web and Proxy servers and TOR servers can muddle things up even more.

visited 12/3/2008

Identity theft is very often the fault of the victims themselves who are naive to social engineering tactics and do not know how to establish security on their computers.

And ironic that it is the U.S. government itself (NSA) that is reading the email of American citizens and not legions of sinister Chinese or Russian hackers.

John M October 23rd, 2008 3:00 pm ET

It appears that al Qaeda, Inc is suffering from the same security problems lots of corporations do. For people who are said to be out to destroy the West, they sure know how to use our technology. Could it be that they really need the West to grow their business of war?

Stoo October 23rd, 2008 3:00 pm ET

I have no love for these people but type of hacking activity hurt us more than helps. It's no surprise why public views are often ignored by the govt and military. Why? Because sheeple are dumb and can't think outside of the box they live in.

Hacking these enemy sites comes at a cost. Valuable intel might be gathered by monitoring those sites. If they get hacked and go down, then we lose that trail. Another example were people's big mouths and ego's fail to get processed through their brains.

If you want to be a hero, go join the military and back your ego up with some action. Otherwise stay out of the way.

Michael October 23rd, 2008 3:03 pm ET

Seems like they shold have left it up as a tool to track their activities.

Matt Kazan October 23rd, 2008 3:07 pm ET

Not that I agree with Al-Qaeda, but have any of you ever stopped to think about why Al-Qaeda do what that do? And hating "Freedom and liberty and democracy" is not the right answer. Not even close. I think Al-Qaeda is terrible, but you have to understand why they do what they do. Think about it, read about it. The more we come to understand one another, the closer we can all come to living in harmony and ending these silly partisan proxy-wars.

F Thomas Crump October 23rd, 2008 3:09 pm ET

Looks to me like they simply forgot to re-register their domain.

Billy in Mobile October 23rd, 2008 3:10 pm ET

I say keep hacking them and keep them from spreading their message of hate… and while you're at it, hack the christian websites here in the US…. STOP THE HATE!!!

Hans October 23rd, 2008 3:11 pm ET

I must say I can't believe how easily satisfied the general population of the US is. First you are told " We are looking for him and won't stop looking for him." Then you are told "We are using every resource to find him." "He is hard to locate, but we will find him." Now after how many years you actually think that its going to be a hacker that is going to find him.

Please do me a favor and think about a few things for a second. First, has anyone ever heard of Google Earth. Does anyone know where those satellite pictures come from (And By the way, for about $400 a month, you to can use todays, not a picture from 10 years ago, satellite picture to see yourself picking your nose in your front yard). That picture comes form a GOVERNMENT satellite. This same government has every know kind of nite/restricted vision devices know to mankind (even sights that can see through object for heat fluctuations). And don't forget that miss that has a guidence system that can pinpoint a missile to hit your front door

visited 12/3/2008

as you open it to go to work in the morning (and see your smiling face before it hits).

Boy, I can't believe that you actually believe that they are looking for him. But what I find hardest of all to believe, is that you really think that with all the high-tech devices at the Governments disposal, that it would be a hacker that would find and bring Bin Laden to justice.

Good luck on your next life, cause you lost this one…

Jason October 23rd, 2008 3:12 pm ET

I am not sure if this is news, seems like someone did not renew their domain name….

Markko October 23rd, 2008 3:13 pm ET

Gee, lets see… This could be soooo easy to track, where these sites originate, but funny no one does!!!! Maybe because it is more profitable to wage War then to Win it!!!!!!!! People watch ZEITGEIST the Movie, and open your eyes to everything around!!!! Also watch " Why We Fight" and then tell me why are Americans Dying over there!!!!

Shane October 23rd, 2008 3:15 pm ET

So, first and foremost, the switching of domain registration (as the site redirect would elude to) is vastly different from "hijacking" the website.

However, I can't help but wonder if this is the act of individuals outside of Al-Ekhlaas or is it a strategic move by Al-Ekhlaas and other Al Queda sympathizing organizations? CNN is now reporting that there are plausible threats being reported that Al Queda may be planning another attack on the U.S. prior to the Election (and/or the Inauguration).

Now I know that it may be far fetched, but what better way of being able to strategize another attack than by restricting communication with the outside world and temporarily suspending all websites? Just a thought guys.

ethan October 23rd, 2008 3:16 pm ET

I find this hilarious. Hack away!

krabb October 23rd, 2008 3:18 pm ET

Imagine trying to get help from the Al Qaeda It department…

Nahom October 23rd, 2008 3:19 pm ET

hmmmmmmm, donuts, just don't let them know America Runs on Dunkin, then they might be able to stop us on our track . . . seriously though, al qaeda fights most of it battles on the stage of the media and we have to do better in countering there propaganda . . . I predict at the end we will win but in the mean time . . . hack on people , hack on . . .

Kevin October 23rd, 2008 3:19 pm ET

They prolly just need to upgrade their AOL package and they'll be secure…

Johne October 23rd, 2008 3:19 pm ET

::Yawn:: …this kind of stuff has been going on for years and years. Report on something relevant for once.

Pat October 23rd, 2008 3:19 pm ET

I don't think the government should be determining what sites people are allowed to hack into.

Depending who is running the country they may claim open season on liberal or

visited 12/3/2008

conservitive websites next.

Criminals should not get rewarded for their crimes.

Next what would you like us to do? Pay the murderer who killed the drug dealer?

Joel October 23rd, 2008 3:20 pm ET

So naive all of you. Al Qaeda needs more access, so our data mining can be more effective. Then we can track these murdering sons of dogs(Koran states dogs are a dirty animal) back to their holes.

Chris October 23rd, 2008 3:21 pm ET

You people are missing the point. The article went from talking about hacking to domain hijacking and back to hacking, just with no explanations and poor transitions, but clearly both are being used. I say people should continue to employ whichever methods present themselves to keep these idiots from getting their crazy messages out.

Chut Pata October 23rd, 2008 3:22 pm ET

If they are really Al-Qaeda websites, it would be easy for US agency to track them in seconds with their super computers. So really, these sites appears to be operated by agents of George W Bush, so that stupid America voters would be scared into voting him, and offer to kill and die for his oil interests in the Middle East.

JamesSteal October 23rd, 2008 3:22 pm ET

It just goes to show how paranoid you actually are, Always whining about Al Qaeda, Should focus on your own economy..

Tony, Tennessee October 23rd, 2008 3:24 pm ET

McCain's plan to capture bin Laden? Easy? Simple? Oh, yeah, turn the pitbull in lipstick loose talking about him. If he gets good satellitte recertion in that cave, I am sure listening to her will drive him out in the open. Who knows he may even give the order to his fellow lunatics to just shoot him. After all, she wants to be "in charge of the senate." Hey, if Palin is able to do this, is she eligible for the $25 million reward? Look Saks and Neiman Marcus!!!

Ryan October 23rd, 2008 3:25 pm ET

Idiots. You think that the NSA or any other government agency hasn't tried "Spam software or tracking software to get these guys?" Way to be brilliant, William Joseph Donavan.

Charlie Scott October 23rd, 2008 3:25 pm ET

"Hahaha, even on the internet they have to hide. Osama bin Laden will die wracked with disease in a hole somewhere in a crap part of the world fearful until the last moments, before his kidneys die and his own excrement kills him, that the US will swat him like a fly. He can't have too much longer to go, he may even be dead all ready, may his corpse fester and rot."

Ifyou actually believe Osama is in a "cave" or a "hole". .. you are ignorant. He is well protected in a nice villa in Pakistan (probably NOT northern Pakistan either). Due to his coffers of cash, he most likely has better health care than any of us. Osama is doing just fine, trust me.

Daniel Sea October 23rd, 2008 3:26 pm ET

Hacked or no, it's always good when they are off the grid, for whatever reason. New sites should now be monitored and reverse IP tools implemented….

Romeo October 23rd, 2008 3:26 pm ET

Big ouffff!! This would not put an end to war on terror! U.S Government, get your

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act right, stop spending time/money on nonsense and wipe off the dirt which still sets at Pakistan/Afghanistan border.

Mr. Owl

October 23rd, 2008 3:32 pm ET

Thank you Illumanati.

Andy

October 23rd, 2008 3:33 pm ET

I bet it is the Democrats trying to prevent an October surprise.

Chris

October 23rd, 2008 3:37 pm ET

You're all "Americans" right? You hate these terrorists, they bombed NYC (supposedly) they scare you enough to implant RF trackers in your bodies and allow your phone lines to to tapped. You do these things so that you can enjoy your rights to freedom of religion, freedom to carry arms, even the "basic human right" of free speech. Oh, wait, you seem against that from what I can tell from these postings. You people are hypocritical and depressing with your mixed messages and your conflicting views. Find away to get over these "terrorists" (they cannot be that scar, seriously) and remember what you stand for, freedom for ALL.

~Mudge

simran

October 23rd, 2008 3:38 pm ET

The only way the war is gonna end is if the U.S.A and other countries in the Region take a proper offensive. Its a fact that if full control of the fight was given to the INDIA, the war would be over in a second. The war tactics that the USA and other Countries are using is not working because its not a typical war. India has fought this war before and they know how to go in and deal with these people. You dont take prisoners and ship them off to Cuba for instance, you kill them. This war is gonna go on forever, the enemy is to strong for the USA and we are realize that now. In regards to the websites, they should all be kicked offline, no questions asked.

Tony the H@cKer

October 23rd, 2008 3:39 pm ET

Agree with most others here, this is not hacking. It's either an un-configured domain, a lapsed domain, or at best case in tech terms close to hacking a hijacked domain. Either way, it's not as easy to find a particular person based on them posting to websites as many people here think. I for one would love to actually hack bin laden and blow his computer up in his face if that was feasibly possible.

Wil W

October 23rd, 2008 3:42 pm ET

Dan, Its a social engineering hack, not a technical one. Joker.com is probably not responsible for it. The hacker in question probably impersonated the owner of the account and asked that it be transfered to forward to joker.com. Its like changing the sign that point drivers to Albuquerque so that it points towards Mexico City instead of the original designation.

Tony

October 23rd, 2008 3:43 pm ET

I would just about imagine that the US Government already has hackers on the payroll and could very well be the ones hacking into the Al Qaeda sites. If this is the case, of course, you would never hear any details about it for obvious reasons.

nelson

October 23rd, 2008 3:43 pm ET

OK,

So we know they aren't up on their technology yet.

Chris

October 23rd, 2008 3:44 pm ET

Gee I think maybe people are getting the clue. Thank goodness for Hackers!! Hackers cant stand it either their no different, if you put them to use. They will good and vital information alone.

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eric October 23rd, 2008 3:47 pm ET

All I know is that the fewer messages there are spreading their filth the better. I love the fact that these lunatics think they are going to some higher place when in fact they will spend eternity paying for their despicable acts of brutality and hate in HELL!!! No…virgins, no glory…eternal punishment for being a scumbag!

mohammed October 23rd, 2008 3:51 pm ET

i'm happy to see this. i wish they would go to each and every single website praising bin laden or spreading his poisonous message. he is a joke and piece of trash and in no way a representation of islam at all. i hope he suffers a long and painful death however that may be. but i really hope it comes at the hands of a U.S soldier. what irony would it be to see someone who pledged his life to killing americans but he himself dies at the hands of an american? although i the policies of the west are hypocritical and oppress the muslim world, bin laden, the taliban, and al qaeda are biggest threat to the free world and the islamic world and should be wiped off the face of the earth. long live america, long live afghansitan, long live iraq,

oliver October 23rd, 2008 3:52 pm ET

@Jim:
that's not really how the internet works…

David October 23rd, 2008 3:53 pm ET

for those suggesting to use the IP address to track these guys down, that's potentially helpful but ultimately not reliable. spoofing an IP address is easy, even spoofing a MAC address can be done now as most network cards are easily configurable. the IP address of the domain can be traced but that doesn't help because the web server could be located anywhere. the most helpful thing that could be done is to get the registrar's cooperation in providing the information they were registered with; at least the billing information they gave has to be correct.

all of that said, never underestimate the power of grey hat hackers. }:-)

Ray October 23rd, 2008 3:56 pm ET

Hopefully, the US intelligence community is doing this hacking! Why would we allow subversive groups to spread their poison with impunity? This is very much like Radio Free Europe and other propoganda outlets that were jammed by the Soviet Union and others. It's about time that we use the same techniques against terrorists.

In fact, I would suggest that we set up a scam website and require people to register to use it, as described in this article. This would be a reverse sting operation where the bad guys might identify themselves further than they ordinarily would!

Randy October 23rd, 2008 3:56 pm ET

And if they track that messege back to a lap-top, they can teel where that lap-top is? Or is it like tracking down a cell phone where you can tell which towers picked up the signal?

Greg October 23rd, 2008 3:57 pm ET

Perhaps between our bombs and their suicide bombs there is enough attrition that they are losing some of their technical prowess. It is more likely that they have found more secure means by which to communicate. Any way you look at it, growing deficiencies in their mass propaganda apparatus is a sign of weakness. That is potentially a good thing as perhaps they are losing some of their appeal to the masses in the muslim world. Over time if they do not adapt and evolve the masses will become jaded with the same old boring messages and lack of spectacular success. I am hoping this reactionary brand of Islam will become a

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generational trend and eventually discarded by the next generation of young muslims much as disco was discarded by American youth.

Derwood

October 23rd, 2008 4:00 pm ET

Quoth Jim:

"If the Hackers can get into the sites shouldn't they also be able to write programs that will tell exactly where the computer of origin is located so we can drop a bomb & take the terrorists out ? We have spent Billions on technology & cannot get these guys"

Jim,
Put down the Beer and Cheetos, go outside and take a walk.. You watch too much TV. While it is possible to eventually track the actual physical location of an IP address on the internet, it's not something that can happen with the press of a button.. Also, just because you get the IP address of the computer hosting the web page doesn't mean that Ol' Osama is standing next to it.. Its probably hosted by some flunkie that has been no closer to him that GW Bush has.

PQ

October 23rd, 2008 4:03 pm ET

So often we see al Qaeda trying to turn society back 1,000 years where women are possessions, children (especially female) are denied education and opportunity, entertainment is non-existent, news is suppressed, innovation is evil, and tolerance is absolutely intolerated. Yet these same hypocrites use the Internet, a western invention, to spread their message.

It's the same mindset where women are forced to be "modest" and covered up to avoid sexual attraction, yet men commonly use rape as a punishment against women who violate their "moral code."

Hypocrites!

Jeremy

October 23rd, 2008 4:03 pm ET

personally all that everyone has said in these comments our government has tried to use the ip address and all the devices they have to find the terrorists and yes the government has some of the best hackers in the world doing what you all have said. Which imo our government dosnt want to find them or there being lazy cause they like panic it can cause with the terror meter they have honestly we should sweep the mid east in a line and search every house and take a sonar map of all the cities so we can see underground passages and kill all of them

TonyP

October 23rd, 2008 4:09 pm ET

Everyone who hasn't been brainwashed knows that religion is an archaic system of control practiced by those who lack the intellectual where with all to impose their will by other means. All free thinking peoples should stand up and cheer whenever a blow for freedom from religion is struck against all and all religious websites. Isn't there enough disinformation and lies on the Internet already??

mj

October 23rd, 2008 4:19 pm ET

Here we go with another distraction so the American people can get swindled. I guess terrorist, terrorist is next, right? Let the media propaganda begin. Now they don't want us to go to banks, because of the mysterious powder. Another Gov't tactic for WarGames. Thanks, but No Thanks.

Lisa

October 23rd, 2008 4:22 pm ET

While I understand everyone's disgust with the messages that may be touted on these websites I would like to remind people that one of the most beautiful concepts to come out of democracy is Freedom of Speech. I will let "President Andrew Shepherd" (Michael Douglas) from "The American President:" take it from

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here:
“America is advanced citizenship… “You want free speech? Let’s see you acknowledge a man whose words make your blood boil, who’s standing center stage and advocating at the top of his lungs that which you would spend a lifetime opposing at the top of yours. You want to claim this land as the land of the free? Then the symbol of your country can’t just be a flag; the symbol also has to be one of its citizens exercising his right to burn that flag in protest. Show me that, defend that, celebrate that in your classrooms. Then, you can stand up and sing about the “land of the free”. …”

Angel
October 23rd, 2008 4:24 pm ET
Sometimes, i get the feeling that Osama is made up but again I don’t know…..who knows….at this point I don’t know what to believe anymore……

Nicholas
October 23rd, 2008 4:25 pm ET
Bin laden should be dead by now with the huge amount of money invested into antiterriorism. We must not allow these folks to make it to the news. It is rather an indication of US weakness. The more u wrtie about them the more popular they become.

Nicholas From Nigeria

Kevin
October 23rd, 2008 4:26 pm ET
The US government is a joke. It is such a disgrace that the US Government invented and owns the internet but will not trace these terrorists. Citizens are on their own in protecting themselves from these terrorists. Government is so inefficient and poorly run. US spends billions of taxpayer funds in war against terrorism but most of it goes to enlarge a bureaocracy that is barely working.

Hala Abdoun
October 23rd, 2008 4:27 pm ET
I agree with mostly everyone here… how are hackers able to hack without tracking them down? Seriously this whole “we can’t find Osama” is more proof that the man is most likely dead or non existent to begin with!

Josh
October 23rd, 2008 4:28 pm ET
I very much doubt most of these sites are even real. There are so many parties with interests in keeping the terrorist boogey man alive and well. Israel for one. Pretty much any intelligence agency worldwide. Anytime there are intelligence agency/military budget cuts or elections on horizon terror websites and threats seem to pop out of the woodwork. With the world wide financial crisis in the works what better way to send the message to tax payers that cutting the military or intelligence agency budgets is too scary of an option. If that doesn’t work no doubt they will manufacture some real activity.

Dev
October 23rd, 2008 4:30 pm ET
I don’t understand how terrorist groups are able to even have websites. I have never understood.

There are two options here:

1) In order to put your website up, you need to have a service provider who will host you. This service provider has the IP address of the computers where the sites are updated from. This is elementary.

2) The other option is that these groups have their own servers and data centers and T1 lines. I find this second option hard to believe. It has to be the previous one.

So why isn’t someone talking to these service providers and getting the details about the locations where the sites are updated from?

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This is ridiculous. I don't buy this. You will have me believe that the bad guys have access to the Internet, access to service providers and there is no way to find them?
Seems its not a lack of resource or technology, but a lack of will that is in the way of finding the terrorists.

Mustapha Ibrahim October 23rd, 2008 4:31 pm ET

You should not be fulled may be they just discovered other ways to get the message to there followers. think about it. the west owns technology they my think the west will know there every move if they keep using the internet. "Technology".

Mike Hollingsworth October 23rd, 2008 4:32 pm ET

Hackers of the world! Unite! Open season has been declared on all terrorist propogating sites!!! Crash them all!!

LJ Roy October 23rd, 2008 4:34 pm ET

We get hackers and spams, and viruses and computer abuses all the time. Why should al Qaeda be any different (other than the acual content).

Face it, as long as society uses computers, no matter who you are, or where you are, you're going to have this problem.

Steve October 23rd, 2008 4:35 pm ET

can someone explain to me why we insist "Bin Laden" is alive?

talk about keeping the fear alive….

scott October 23rd, 2008 4:35 pm ET

The hackers were probably employed by the NSA or CIA

Ben October 23rd, 2008 4:36 pm ET

Al Qaeda doesn't even exist so whats the point anyways?

am October 23rd, 2008 4:37 pm ET

We (the US gov.) employ many hackers. Yes out and out employ them to take down terror websites and other "enemies of the state" They are smart, professional and have lots of good gear.

Mark October 23rd, 2008 4:38 pm ET

Oh come on. Hacking has nothing to do with it. The problem is that you can trace data on websites back to geographic locations and bank accounts. Obviously Al Qaeda doesn't want to post info that way. You want propaganda? Just go to cnn.com and see all the stupid things Bush & Co are doing to make the world safe for the crumbling Western economic system. The monkey in the White House and all his confidants are doing a great job for Al Qaeda's ultimate interests. Just reporting on it is enough.

steve October 23rd, 2008 4:45 pm ET

What happened to freedom of speech?

It's amusing that America wants to limit other people's free speech as much as the terrorists want to limit free speech.

The reason we are being attacked is because of our refusal to negotiate. We leave them no choice.

The Declaration of Independence is based on the same refusal to negotiate, except then we were the rebel, and it was the King who was deaf.

visited 12/3/2008

Isn't it funny how history repeats itself? People become that which they fear most.

dakota low October 23rd, 2008 4:45 pm ET

well if it keeps getting hacked then why doesn't the United States just put up an unbreakable virus wall that can cause a virus that can completely crash the main frame of the main computer. so if they keep hacking it their main frame will crash.

Jack Crowe October 23rd, 2008 4:46 pm ET

I didnt realize these people had the brain capacity to hack each other to smithereens?

namsu October 23rd, 2008 4:49 pm ET

If the average hacker is getting into these sites, I can bet you that the Gov. probably has them under surveillance. Maybe the hackers are hindering the Gov.'s job. If you want to hack, do it so you can collect some information for law enforcement. If you disable the site, you close the door to information that may be used to capture binladen.

BGko October 23rd, 2008 4:50 pm ET

Anyone who thinks that bin Laden is still alive and that our government is and has been actually looking for him is a buffoon. The only reason the media and White House keeps up this illusion that bin Laden is out there hiding and we are trying to find him, is because if we find him or if we say he is dead, then it's really hard to justify continuing a war that was all about getting him. And the last thing they want to do is pull the military out of the middle east. They still have a couple more countries they want to invade as outlined in PNAC, an official gov't document put into effect in 2001 when W. became the president and written by Cheney, Rumsfield, Jeb Bush and Wolfowitz. The purpose of Iraq was to destabilize the region and set up permanent military bases. Ask yourself this: If the White House wanted to catch bin Laden, then why was it that on 9/11 after every plane in the US was grounded, the only planes other than military and AF1 in the skies that day were the ones that were carrying all of bin Laden's family back to their home country? Wouldn't we want to detain them for questioning? Interesting. But don't take my word for any of this, do the research yourself.

Paul October 23rd, 2008 4:50 pm ET

So al Qaeda routinely (and often violently) rejects the West and our western lifestyle, yet they use the Internet, a western invention, to spread their message.

Hypocrites.

StoJo October 23rd, 2008 4:53 pm ET

Regardless of their hatred of our liberties, Muslim extremists can neither control nor stop the spread, power or freedoms of the Internet. Although they may be able to place burkas on their women, they cannot cover up free-thinking hackers. God bless the Internet!

stevethetruck October 23rd, 2008 4:53 pm ET

Sorry, i just don't believe the whole Bin laden story anymore. Bush has worked with that faily for years. He even snuck them outa the country after te false flag of 911. they pull his pictureout of thecrypt every time they want to scare us but he has NEVER BEEN CHARGED by the FBI for any crimes related to 911 even though YOU, CNN, hd his face all over the news withing hours of the "attacks". Sorry I don't belive this hack story or CNN anymore.

Donkey Kong October 23rd, 2008 4:54 pm ET

This is not hacking. Their domain registration expired and someone else bought it.

Philly Mike October 23rd, 2008 4:57 pm ET

I believe that the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 Amendments Act of

visited 12/3/2008

2008 makes this type of hacking illegal

Craig October 23rd, 2008 4:59 pm ET

I say let Al Qaeda have some Websites. What better way to gain information then letting them post it online for us all to read. We would better understand their leadership, structure, plans, etc.

chris in FL October 23rd, 2008 5:02 pm ET

Obama will find him, he's promised he will do everything else. Wait, 68% of the military want McCain to win, I hope those inspiring speeches to all the cool-aide drinking, handout wanting, class warfare types work on the military.

MH October 23rd, 2008 5:02 pm ET

I can't believe people would be so rude as to hack into AL Qaeda websites. He is just another "victim" of the West ; misunderstood.

I'm sure that Bin Laden could find a lawyer in the USA to represent him in a suit against the government. After all it was "George Bush's fault" (per Rosie) for September 11, 2001. Better yet Bin Laden could sue for liable.

In reality…let's go kick the crap out of him. He's a murderer.

Gary Davis October 23rd, 2008 5:02 pm ET

I say let them have their websites and use them to find out who is posting. A good sniffer identifing the posters would be worth its weight in gold.

John Tucker, New York City, NY October 23rd, 2008 5:04 pm ET

I find it quite funny actually lol…. thats supposed to be like their top secret, password protected website…. So much for " HIgh Level Security "

Mike - Central Canada October 23rd, 2008 5:06 pm ET

Everyone seems to think that everyone visiting a pro-Al-Qaeda website is a terrorist. Far from it. People are free to support the actions and goals of Al-Qaeda if they wish. Terrorists perform acts of terrorism. Visiting a website and believing there are good reasons behind the actions of Al-Qaeda ARE NOT acts of terrorism.

Andrew Leonidas October 23rd, 2008 5:06 pm ET

If the intelligence services really wanted all Al Qaeda linked websites removed from the net it would be a trivial matter, but why would they? They provide a honeypot of information about the forward face of the organization and those interested in it's message.

These websites provide a starting point for tracing the locations of all the sympathizers and possible cell members that access the pages and a technical means to back trace the origin of the media that is posted. I'm sure these radical forums have been the primary source of information used to identify individuals that needed to be put on a watch list and were eventually arrested, especially in Europe.

In the mountains on the Afghan border Al Qaeda has the upper hand, but on an open global computer network centrally controlled by the United States they really don't stand a chance, its the one domain where the intelligence services really are in control and know what they are doing. They are monitoring the websites constantly for valuable information and well meaning kids trying in vain to momentarily take them off the web are only taking away an important resource. If the intelligence community didn't feel that the gains outweighed the risks allowing them to stay active the websites would already vanish from the net before the suburban computer vigilantes even had a chance to hear about them.

Heather,ca October 23rd, 2008 5:13 pm ET

visited 12/3/2008

Wow. Who knew, so terrorist organizations have hitech problems to. I cant believe Im even commenting on this. This is so funny, weird,strange, odd etc. Maybe if they keep having technical difficulties with each other via the virtual online world they will hopefully stay out of our physical world and the real world attacks. So do they outsource tech support or something? How does a terrorist organization request tech support. Hi perhaps you have heard of my organization, we are very big and well known still dont know how about 9/11? Yeah that was us. We keep getting hacked and since this is a very busy time of year with the us election and a new president we need to get our site up thanks.

Richard Rankin

October 23rd, 2008 5:13 pm ET

It's time to go after their money. Start phishing for donations, find bank accounts, credit cards, etc. There's a lot of dough out there going to them. Let's steal it.

Oh yeah, I don't really mean it - I'm not encouraging criminal activity. Just a joke. Just kidding.

MB

October 23rd, 2008 5:17 pm ET

Wow. It's amazing how many people are still so ignorant about the Internet and how it works.

In the comments section we see people talking about tracking them with SPAM (via the NSA, no doubt!), someone suggesting we monitor them with "reverse IP tools" (whatever that is), using super computers to track them "in seconds", someone else throwing out the phrase "social engineering" like they know what it means, someone else thinking we can plant a virus on the web site that will allow a bomb to track to it… ad nauseam!

Not to mention the poorly researched article itself.

This is why I get paid so well. Thanks for your support.

jack usaf retired

October 23rd, 2008 5:21 pm ET

i like your page,showing and advertizing for obama,you news people are really screwed up,you had better listen to mccaiin,our future is in the hands of a man that can protect our country,withgreat experience,obama dosent have the experience of a private,as a matter of fact,a privat would know more…get real cnn

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