



**Argas Advanced Technologies Group, Inc.**  
*Keeping You Connected To Technology*

# **The Battle Against Anonymous Browsing:**

*The Security Challenges  
Presented by Tor*

# Brief Introduction

- David A. Vargas
  - Work
    - President, VATG, Inc.
  - Teaching
    - Professor of Networking and Network Security
  - Education
    - BA, The George Washington University
    - MS, The Johns Hopkins University
  - Training:
    - Navy Cryptography
    - Army Counterintelligence
    - Security Audit, Malware Analysis, Digital Forensics, etc.
  - Primary certs:
    - CISSP, CISM, and CEHv7



# *Presentation Outline*

- Introduction to the Dark Web - Hiding in Darkness
- What is Tor?
- Detecting Tor
- Chinks in the Armor - The Exit Node Problem
- Tor Attacks and Takedowns
- Does Tor Have a Future?





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# Introduction to the Dark Web - Hiding in Darkness

# *Introduction to the Dark Web - Hiding in Darkness*

- Surface Web:
  - The visible web that we are most familiar with



# *Introduction to the Dark Web - Hiding in Darkness*

- What you find when you look deeper:



# *Introduction to the Dark Web - Hiding in Darkness*

- Dark Web:
  - Consists of sites that are private or at least accessible only by those who know what they are looking for
  - Because of its anonymity, frequently used by deviant subcultures (criminals, pedophiles, etc.)



*Aside: A comment on the terms*



# *Introduction to the Dark Web - Hiding in Darkness*



**Estimates have suggested that the deep web is 4,000 to 5,000 times larger than the surface web.**

# Searching the Dark

- Although the dark web exists on the very same physical infrastructure as the surface web, it cannot be indexed by traditional search engines
  - As a result, its contents do not appear as the result of common web searches
- Special search engines and sites are required

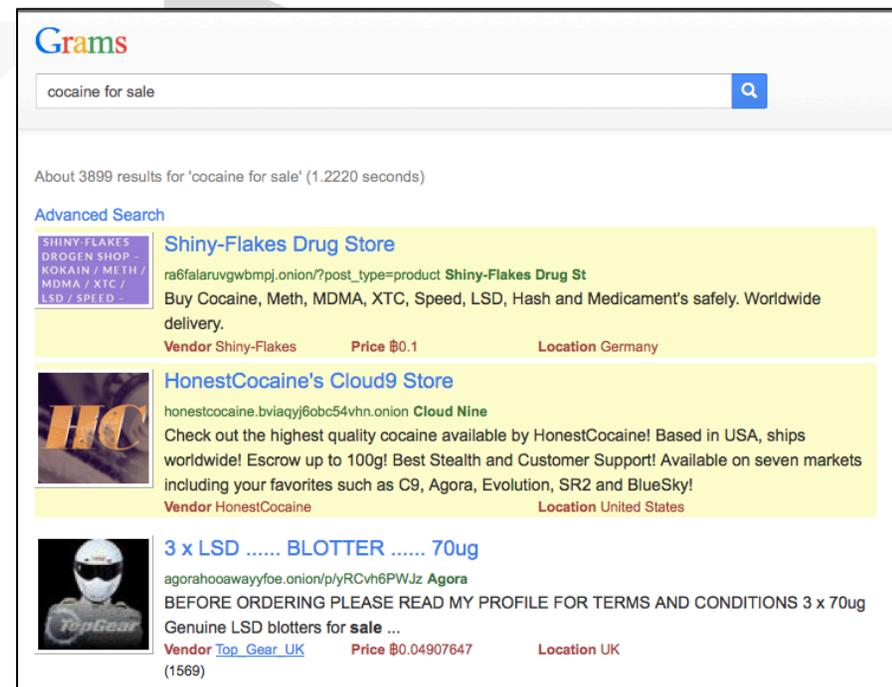
## Grams Darknet Market Search Engine:



<http://grams7enufi7jmdl.onion/>

# Searching the Dark

- Grams Darknet Market Search Engine
  - No-frills interface similar to Google's
    - Copies Google's "I'm Feeling Lucky" button
  - Requires the user be on the Tor network

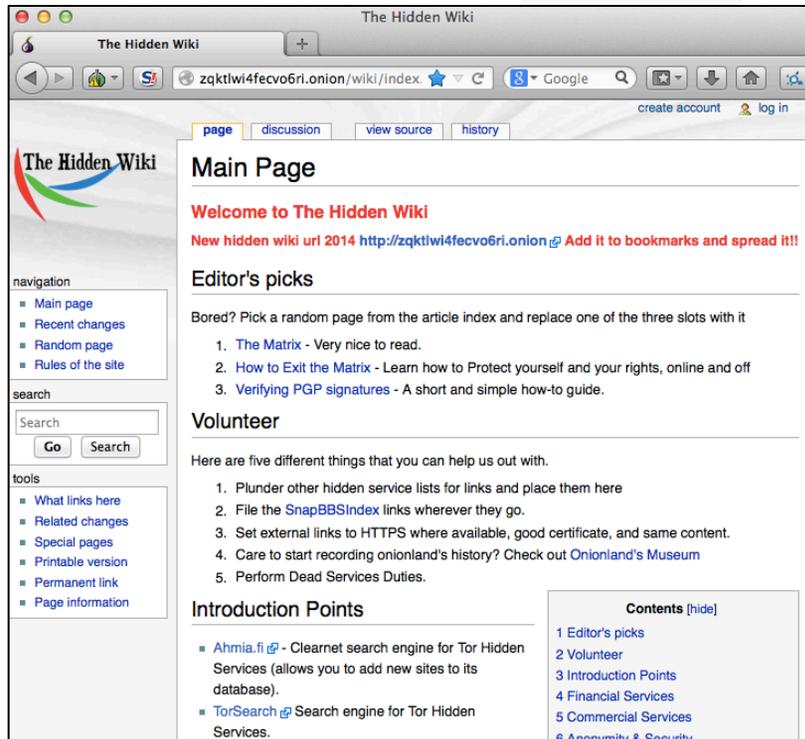


The screenshot shows the Grams search engine interface. At the top, the search bar contains the text "cocaine for sale" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, it indicates "About 3899 results for 'cocaine for sale' (1.2220 seconds)". An "Advanced Search" link is visible. The results are displayed in a list format with three items:

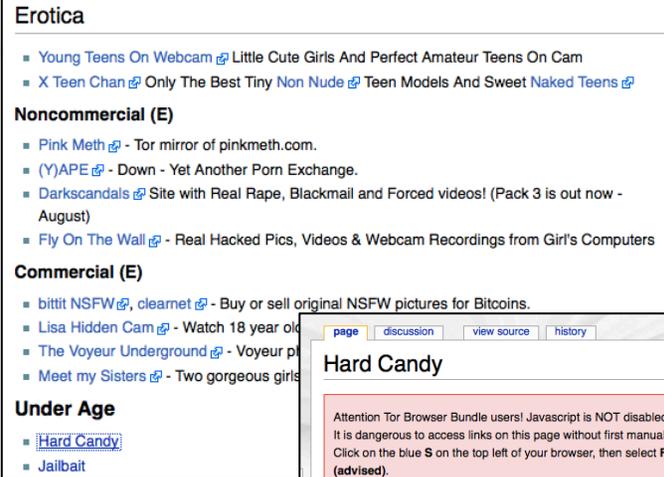
- Shiny-Flakes Drug Store**: Includes a small icon with text "SHINY-FLAKES DROGEN SHOP - KOKAIN / METH / MDMA / XTC / LSD / SPEED -". Description: "Buy Cocaine, Meth, MDMA, XTC, Speed, LSD, Hash and Medicament's safely. Worldwide delivery." Vendor: Shiny-Flakes, Price: \$0.1, Location: Germany.
- HonestCocaine's Cloud9 Store**: Includes a small icon with "HC". Description: "Check out the highest quality cocaine available by HonestCocaine! Based in USA, ships worldwide! Escrow up to 100g! Best Stealth and Customer Support! Available on seven markets including your favorites such as C9, Agora, Evolution, SR2 and BlueSky!" Vendor: HonestCocaine, Location: United States.
- 3 x LSD ..... BLOTTER ..... 70ug**: Includes a small icon of a person wearing a helmet. Description: "BEFORE ORDERING PLEASE READ MY PROFILE FOR TERMS AND CONDITIONS 3 x 70ug Genuine LSD blotters for sale ..." Vendor: Top\_Gear\_UK, Price: \$0.04907647, Location: UK (1569).

# Searching the Dark

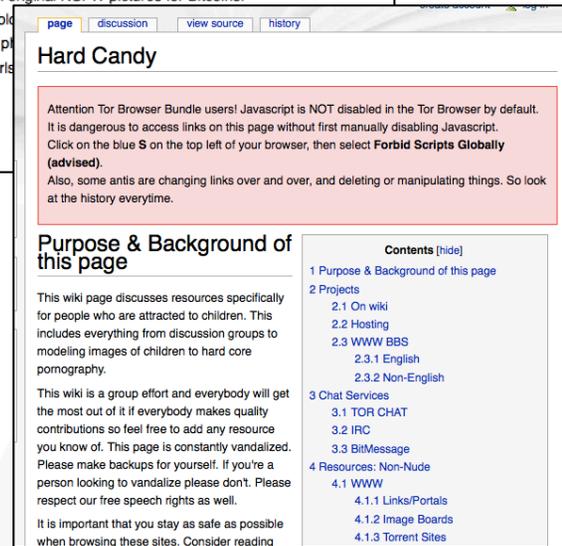
- The Hidden Wiki



The screenshot shows the main page of The Hidden Wiki. The browser address bar displays the URL [zqktlwi4fecvo6ri.onion/wiki/index](http://zqktlwi4fecvo6ri.onion/wiki/index). The page features a navigation menu on the left with links to Main page, Recent changes, Random page, and Rules of the site. The main content area includes a 'Welcome to The Hidden Wiki' message, a 'New hidden wiki url 2014' announcement, and sections for 'Editor's picks', 'Volunteer', and 'Introduction Points'. A 'Contents' table of contents is visible on the right side of the page.



This screenshot shows the 'Erotica' and 'Noncommercial (E)' sections of The Hidden Wiki. The 'Erotica' section lists links to 'Young Teens On Webcam', 'X Teen Chan', and 'Only The Best Tiny Non Nude'. The 'Noncommercial (E)' section lists links to 'Pink Meth', '(Y)APE', 'Darkscandals', and 'Fly On The Wall'. Below these are sections for 'Commercial (E)' and 'Under Age', with 'Hard Candy' listed under the latter.



This screenshot shows the 'Hard Candy' page. It features a prominent warning box with a red border stating: 'Attention Tor Browser Bundle users! Javascript is NOT disabled in the Tor Browser by default. It is dangerous to access links on this page without first manually disabling Javascript. Click on the blue S on the top left of your browser, then select **Forbid Scripts Globally (advised)**. Also, some antis are changing links over and over, and deleting or manipulating things. So look at the history everytime.' Below the warning is the 'Purpose & Background of this page' section, which explains that the page is for people attracted to children and is constantly vandalized. A 'Contents' table of contents is also visible on the right side of the page.

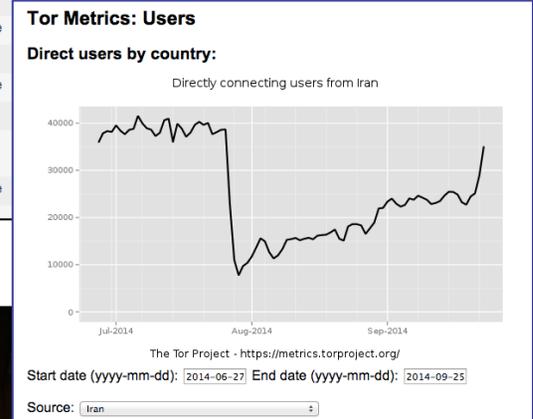


# Legal Activities on the Dark Web

- Use the dark web legally:
  - Normal People (Firewalled)
  - Military
  - Law Enforcement
  - Businesses
  - IT Professionals
  - Journalists and Bloggers
  - Political Dissidents
  - Activists
  - Whistleblowers
  - NGOs

ONI ranking of each country for internet censorship  
Click heading to sort table. [Download this data](#)

Country	Political filtering	Social filtering	Internet tools filtering	Conflict/security filtering
China	pervasive	substantial	substantial	pervasive
Burma (Myanmar)	pervasive	substantial	substantial	substantial
Sudan	selective	substantial	substantial	no evidence
Bahrain	pervasive	pervasive	substantial	selective
Oman	selective	pervasive	substantial	no evidence
Vietnam	pervasive	selective	substantial	selective
Morocco	no evidence	selective	selective	selective
Turkey	selective	selective	selective	no evidence
Pakistan	selective	selective	selective	substantial

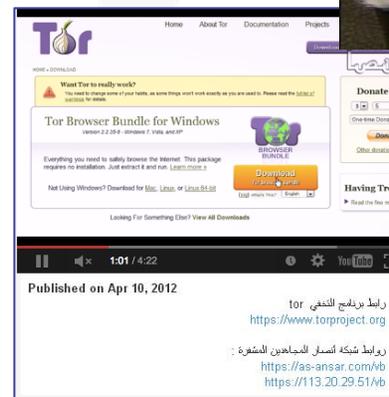


**Anti-corruption crusader Alexei Navalny's blog was blocked by Russian authorities and now can only be accessed through Tor**

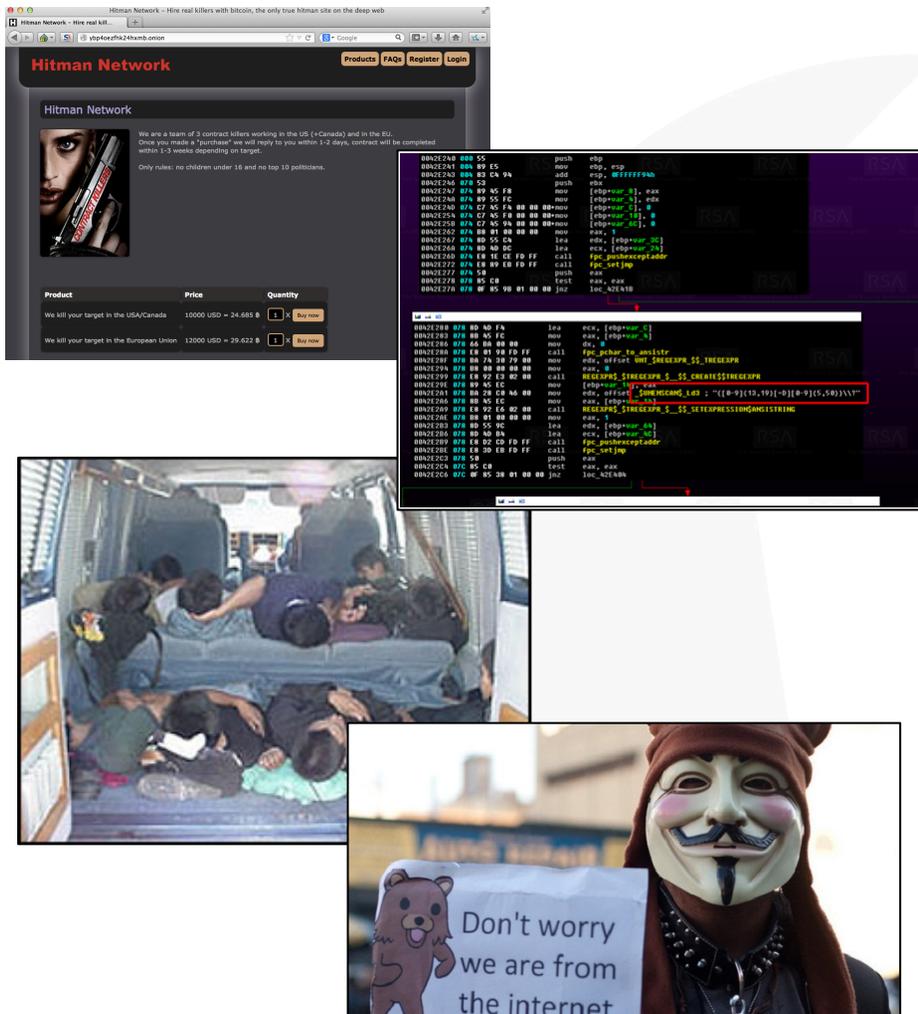


# Illegal Activities on the Dark Web

- Examples of illegal uses:
  - Sale and distribution of child pornography
  - Sale of drugs and drug paraphernalia
  - Distribution of recipes for drug manufacture
  - Terrorist communication
  - Bitcoin use anonymity
  - Sale of pirated software



# Illegal Activities on the Dark Web



- *Continued:*
  - Hiring of hit men
  - Human-trafficking
  - Malware distribution
  - Botnet control and sale
  - DDoS services
  - Hide from law enforcement
  - Attacker communications
  - Posting of stolen hacktivist information
  - Etc....

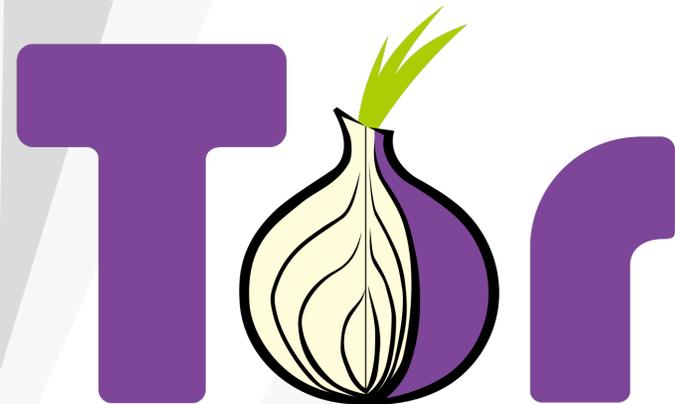


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# What is Tor?

# What is Tor?

- Most popular method of accessing the dark web
- Tor is a *network of virtual tunnels* that provide anonymous browsing using a layered encryption system called “onion routing”
  - Takes the original data and encrypts and re-encrypts it several times before it reaches its final destination



# What is Tor?

The screenshot shows the Tor Network Map application window. The title bar reads "Tor Network Map". The interface includes a menu bar with "Refresh", "Zoom In", "Zoom Out", "Zoom To Fit", "Full Screen", "Help", and "Close". On the left, a "Relay" list shows various relays with their respective flags and names. The main area displays a globe with blue lines representing network connections between relays across different continents. On the right, a list of relay IDs is shown with checkboxes. At the bottom, a "Connection" table and a detailed view of a selected relay are visible.

Connection	Status
necrid,nixnix,bettertobeapirate	Open
necrid,trusted,UBIT2,mwserver	Open
necrid,c6360136661,CenEnet	Open
necrid,c03cd9ebf,lebut	Open
necrid,bytebutlerfive,hagbard	Open
necrid,g8s8skhakj,3rdplanet	Open
necrid,elc1,Bonzo	Open
necrid,rabeldirabeldihnoll,ro0001	Open
necrid,Yo4,ccd13838	Open

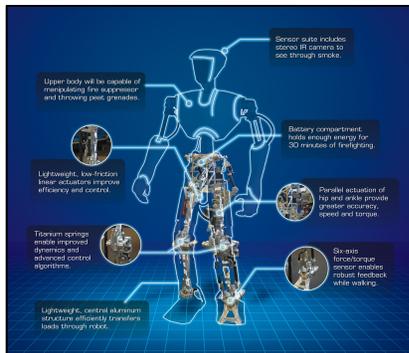
**nixnix (Online)**  
**Location:** Washington, District of Columbia, United States  
**IP Address:** 149.9.0.58  
**Platform:** Tor 0.2.0.34 (r18423) on Linux x86\_64  
**Bandwidth:** 4.37 MB/s  
**Uptime:** 36 days 3 hours 31 mins 22 secs  
**Last Updated:** 2009-05-29 06:33:51 GMT

**bettertobeapirate (Online)**

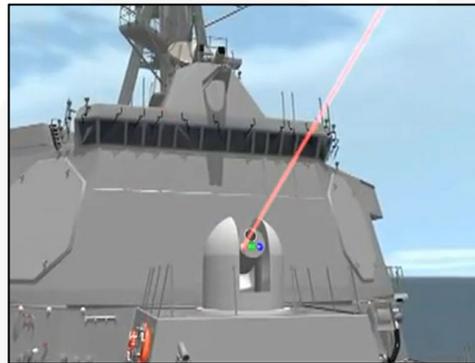
Tor Network Map



# What is Tor?

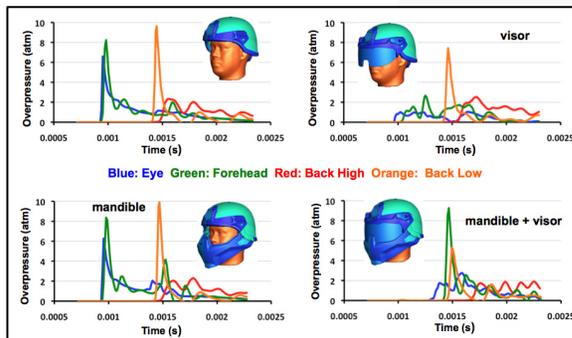


Firefighting Robots



Laser Weapons

- Developed in the mid-1990s by U.S. Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) with the purpose of protecting U.S. intelligence communications online



IED Blast Wave Research



# What is Tor?

- Although Tor was originally developed to protect government communications, it is now maintained and developed through a non-profit organization known as The Tor Project:

**The Tor Project is a Massachusetts-based 501(c)(3) research-education nonprofit organization responsible for maintaining Tor**



<https://www.torproject.org/>



# *What is Tor?*

- In 2014, the following organizations have indicated their support for Tor by contributing financially:
  - SRI International
  - US Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
  - National Science Foundation joint with Georgia Tech and Princeton University
  - Radio Free Asia
  - The Ford Foundation
  - Google Summer of Code



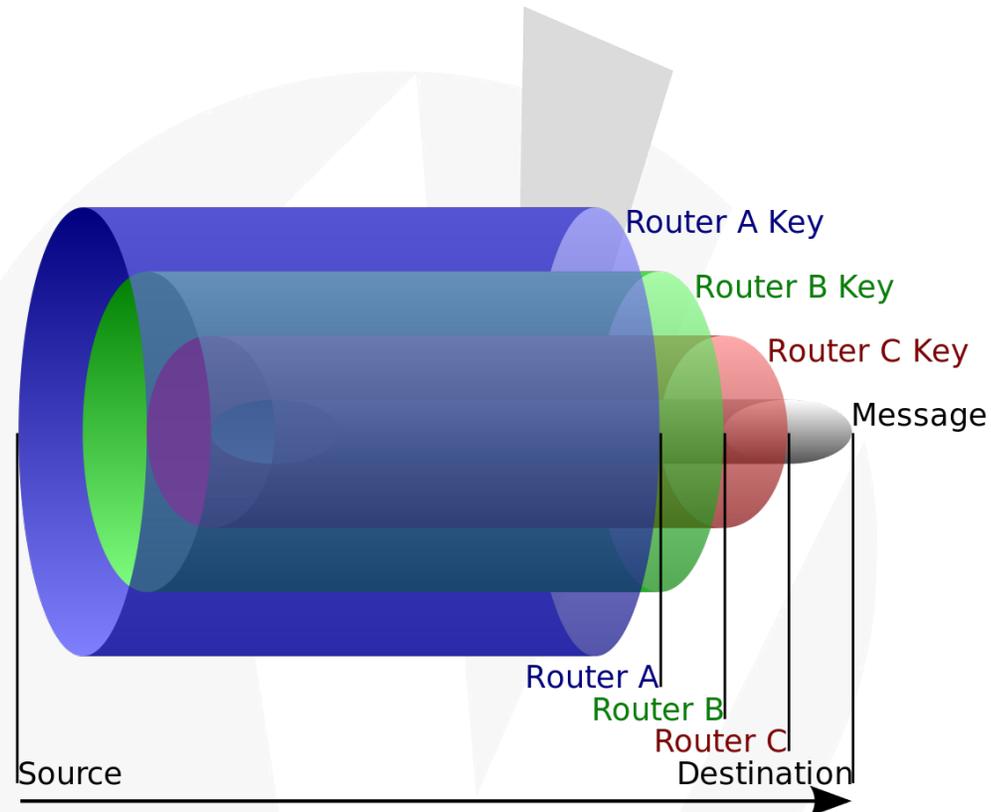
# *Tor's Foundation: Onion Routing*

- The core principle behind Tor is the concept of onion routing
  - An onion is formed by wrapping the original message with successive layers of encryption
  - Each layer can be decrypted like the layer of an onion by one intermediary in a succession of intermediaries, with the original plaintext message only viewable by:
    - Sender
    - Exit node
    - Recipient



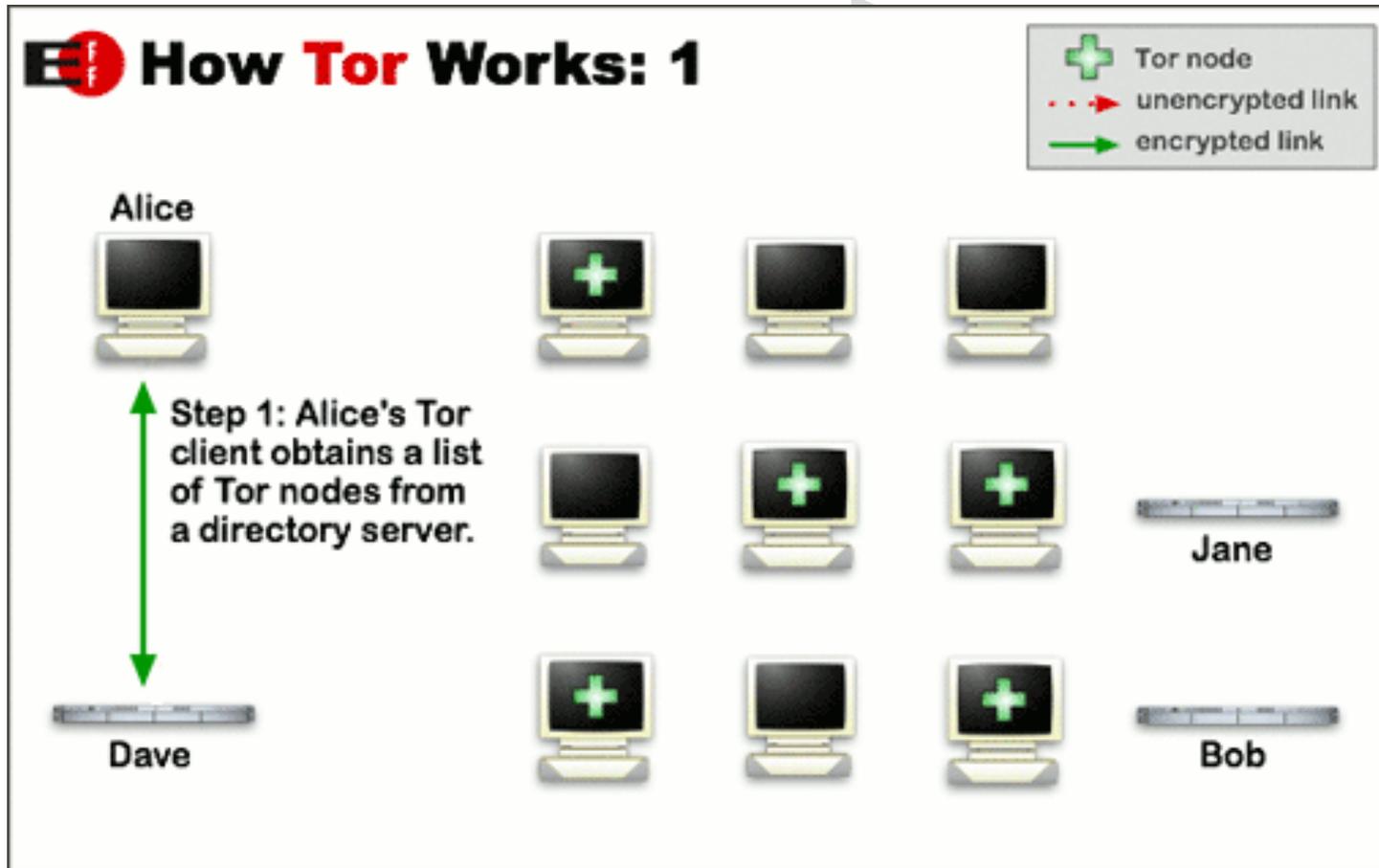
# Tor's Foundation: Onion Routing

## Example Onion:



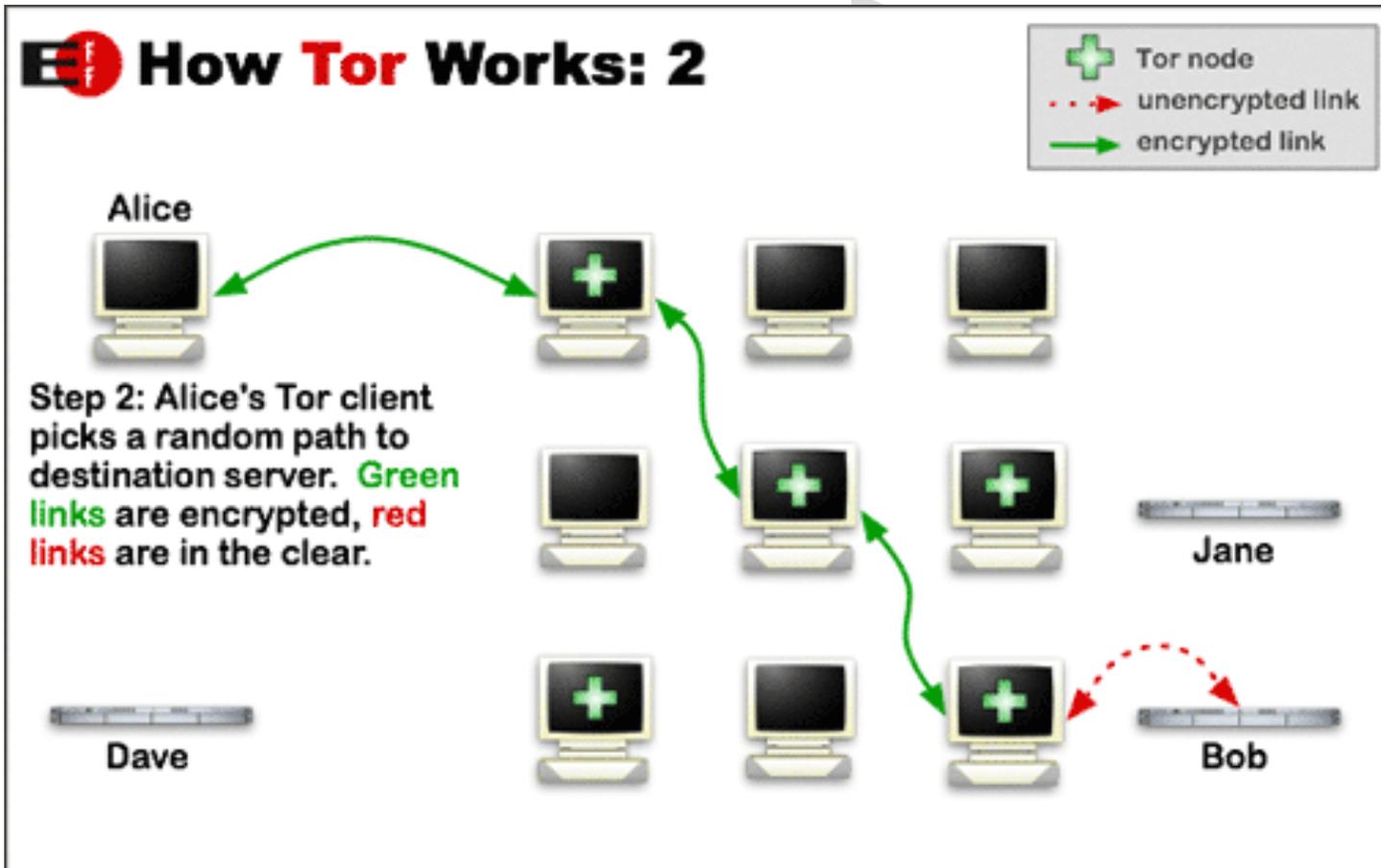
Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onion\\_routing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onion_routing)

# Tor's Foundation: Onion Routing



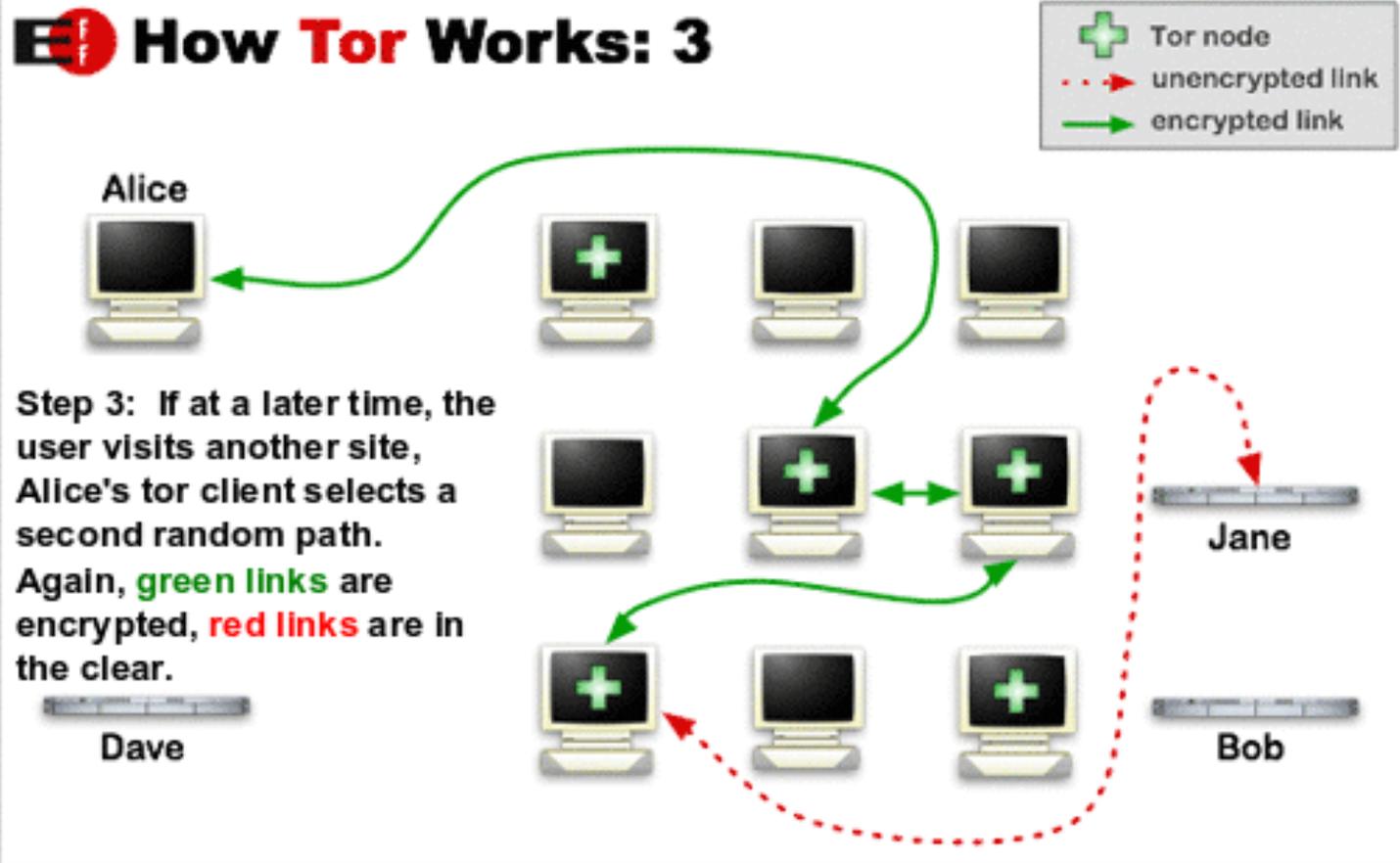
Source: <https://www.torproject.org/about/overview.html.en#thesolution>

# Tor's Foundation: Onion Routing



# Tor's Foundation: Onion Routing

## How Tor Works: 3



# *Tor Relays*

- Tor supports three different types of relays:
  1. Middle Relays
    - Add to the speed and robustness of the network without making the owner of the relay look like the source of the traffic
    - Advertise their presence to the rest of the Tor network so that any Tor user can connect to them
  2. Bridges
    - Not publicly listed as part of the Tor network.
    - Provide the ability to circumvent censorship in countries that regularly block the IP addresses of all publicly listed Tor relays (ie, China)



# *Tor Relays*

## 3. Exit Relays

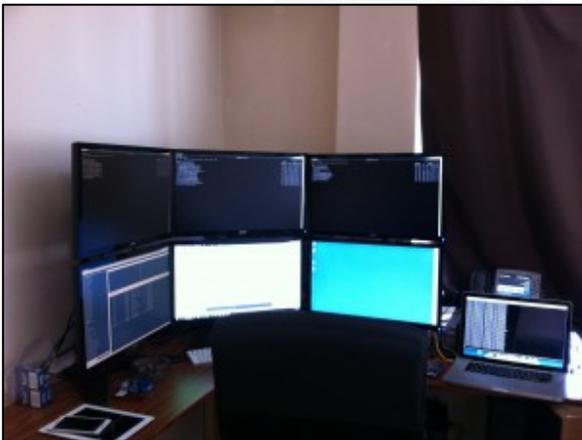
- Final relay that data passes through before it reaches its destination
- Advertise their presence to the entire Tor network so that others can connect to them
- Since this is where all the traffic exits, it also could be determined as the source
  - There is a possibility that if any illegal information is obtained through an exit relay, the owner of the relay might be blamed. Really! Don't believe me...?



# Tor Relays

One man's blog post title:  
(<http://raided4tor.crypto.net>)

RAIDED FOR OPERATING  
A TOR EXIT NODE



Before Raid



After Raid

# Tor's Primary Services

- The two primary services that Tor provides are:

1. Anonymity



2. Hidden Services



# Tor and Anonymity

Confirming on  
Tor Network:



## Congratulations!

This browser is configured to use Tor.

[Test Tor Network Settings](#)



**Congratulations. This browser is  
configured to use Tor.**

Your IP address appears to be: 37.187.39.124



# Tor and Anonymity

## IP Address via Chrome:

Your IP Address Is:  
**216.4.249.66**

### Your IP Details:

ISP: XO Communications

Services: [Confirmed Proxy Server](#)

Country: United States

Don't want this known? [Hide your IP details](#)



## IP Address via TorBrowser:

Your IP Address Is:  
**94.242.255.236**

### Your IP Details:

ISP: root SA

Services: [Confirmed Proxy Server](#)  
Recently report forum spam source.

Country: Anonymous Proxy

Don't want this known? [Hide your IP details](#)



# Tor and Anonymity

- According to the ip2location.com website, the IP address 94.242.255.236 is located in Luxembourg:

IP Address	94.242.255.236
Location	 LUXEMBOURG, LUXEMBOURG, STEINSEL
Latitude & Longitude	49.676940, 6.123890 (49°40'37"N 6°7'26"E)
ISP	ROOT SA
Local Time	26 Sep, 2014 06:51 PM (UTC +02:00)
Domain	ROOT.LU
Net Speed	(COMP) Company/T1
IDD & Area Code	(352) 026
ZIP Code	L-7349
Weather Station	LUXEMBOURG (LUX0003)
Mobile Country Code (MCC)	-
Mobile Network Code (MNC)	-
Carrier Name	-
Elevation	243m
Usage Type	(DCH) Data Center/Web Hosting/Transit
Anonymous Proxy	No
Shortcut	<a href="http://www.ip2location.com/94.242.255.236">http://www.ip2location.com/94.242.255.236</a>

# Tor's Hidden Services

- Tor's onion-routing technology enables the creation of hidden services, websites that can hide their identity from its users and are only accessible via Tor
- In May 2013, *The New Yorker* magazine launched a Tor-hidden service so whistleblowers can securely leave documents or messages



**StrongBox site was by Aaron Swartz and Kevin Poulsen**



# The TorBrowser

- Preconfigured web browser based on Firefox
  - Most recent stable version is 3.6.6 (32 and 64-bit)
  - Can access both Tor and non-Tor sites
  - Multi-platform (OSes, Android, etc.)
  - Can run off of a flash drive
  - Has many features related to more secure browsing



# *Tor and Traffic Analysis*

- Traffic analysis is a technique that intercepts and examines traffic in order to deduce information from communication patterns
  - Because it analyzes communication patterns, it can be performed when when the messages are encrypted
- Tor is supposed to protect against traffic analysis because it hides the source and destination of your Internet traffic





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# Detecting Tor

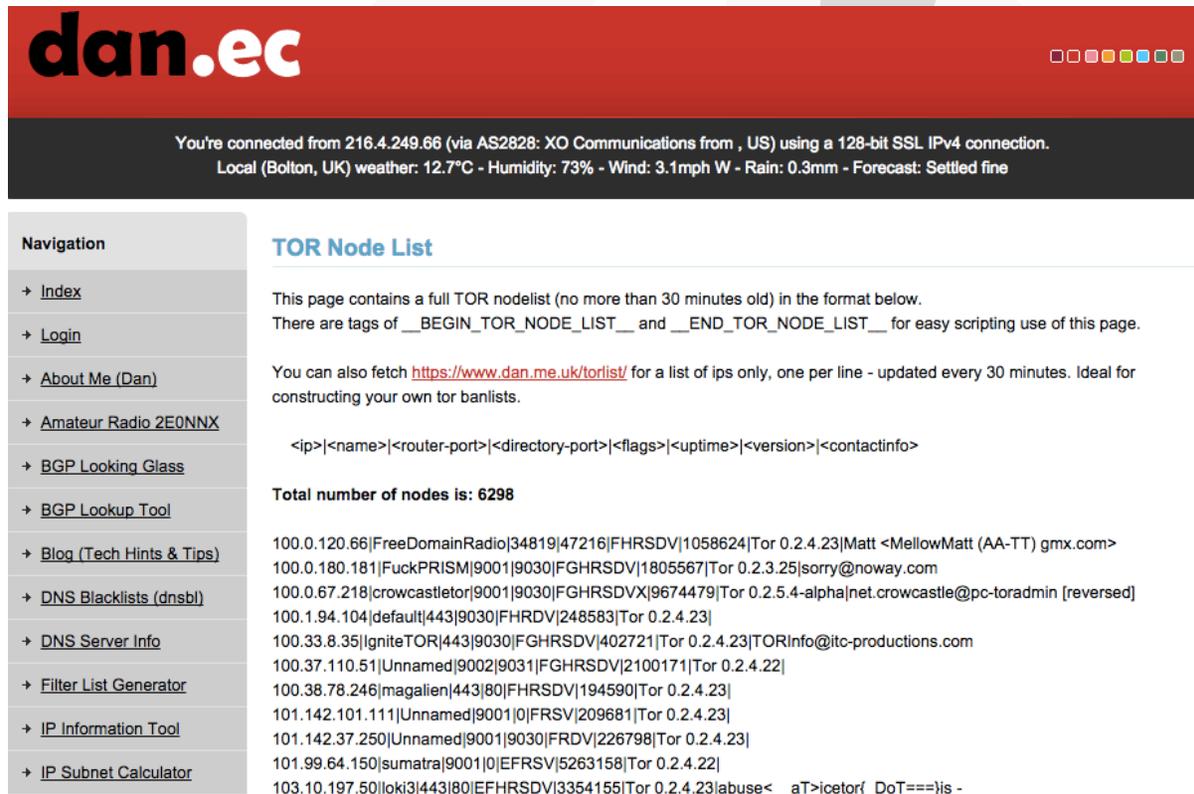
# Detecting Tor

- If have local access, look for the application
- Difficult to detect by observing network traffic because uses TLS (v1):

107	2.267706	198.27.97.223	10.0.0.126	TLSv1	803	Server Hello, Certificate, Server Key Exchange, Server Hello Done
125	2.281025	66.18.12.197	10.0.0.126	TLSv1	994	Server Hello, Certificate, Server Key Exchange, Server Hello Done
141	2.320225	212.83.140.45	10.0.0.126	TLSv1	801	Server Hello, Certificate, Server Key Exchange, Server Hello Done
143	2.320285	64.62.249.222	10.0.0.126	TLSv1	788	Server Hello, Certificate, Server Key Exchange, Server Hello Done
175	2.349662	31.7.186.228	10.0.0.126	TLSv1	809	Server Hello, Certificate, Server Key Exchange, Server Hello Done
184	2.366189	82.96.35.8	10.0.0.126	TLSv1	802	Server Hello, Certificate, Server Key Exchange, Server Hello Done
186	2.366273	95.211.225.167	10.0.0.126	TLSv1	815	Server Hello, Certificate, Server Key Exchange, Server Hello Done
202	2.384445	88.159.20.120	10.0.0.126	TLSv1	1001	Server Hello, Certificate, Server Key Exchange, Server Hello Done
204	2.384602	212.83.158.5	10.0.0.126	TLSv1	807	Server Hello, Certificate, Server Key Exchange, Server Hello Done

# Detecting Tor

- Look for nodes:



The screenshot shows the dan.ec website interface. At the top, there's a red header with the dan.ec logo and a status bar indicating the user's connection details: "You're connected from 216.4.249.66 (via AS2828: XO Communications from , US) using a 128-bit SSL IPv4 connection. Local (Bolton, UK) weather: 12.7°C - Humidity: 73% - Wind: 3.1mph W - Rain: 0.3mm - Forecast: Settled fine".

On the left side, there's a navigation menu with links to Index, Login, About Me (Dan), Amateur Radio 2E0NNX, BGP Looking Glass, BGP Lookup Tool, Blog (Tech Hints & Tips), DNS Blacklists (dnsbl), DNS Server Info, Filter List Generator, IP Information Tool, and IP Subnet Calculator.

The main content area is titled "TOR Node List" and contains the following text:

This page contains a full TOR nodelist (no more than 30 minutes old) in the format below. There are tags of `__BEGIN_TOR_NODE_LIST__` and `__END_TOR_NODE_LIST__` for easy scripting use of this page.

You can also fetch <https://www.dan.me.uk/torlist/> for a list of ips only, one per line - updated every 30 minutes. Ideal for constructing your own tor banlists.

The node list format is shown as: `<ip>|<name>|<router-port>|<directory-port>|<flags>|<uptime>|<version>|<contactinfo>`

**Total number of nodes is: 6298**

The list of nodes includes:

- 100.0.120.66|FreeDomainRadio|34819|47216|FHRSDV|1058624|Tor 0.2.4.23|Matt <MellowMatt (AA-TT) gmx.com>
- 100.0.180.181|FuckPRISM|9001|9030|FGHRSDV|1805567|Tor 0.2.3.25|sorry@noway.com
- 100.0.67.218|crowcastle|9001|9030|FGHRSDV|9674479|Tor 0.2.5.4-alpha|net.crowcastle@pc-toradmin [reversed]
- 100.1.94.104|default|443|9030|FHRDV|248583|Tor 0.2.4.23|
- 100.33.8.35|IgniteTOR|443|9030|FGHRSDV|402721|Tor 0.2.4.23|TORInfo@itc-productions.com
- 100.37.110.51|Unnamed|9002|9031|FGHRSDV|2100171|Tor 0.2.4.22|
- 100.38.78.246|magalien|443|80|FHRSDV|194590|Tor 0.2.4.23|
- 101.142.101.111|Unnamed|9001|0|FRSV|209681|Tor 0.2.4.23|
- 101.142.37.250|Unnamed|9001|9030|FRDV|226798|Tor 0.2.4.23|
- 101.99.64.150|sumatra|9001|0|EFRSV|5263158|Tor 0.2.4.22|
- 103.10.197.50|loki3|443|80|EFHRSDV|3354155|Tor 0.2.4.23|abuse<\_\_aT>icetor{\_DoT===}is -



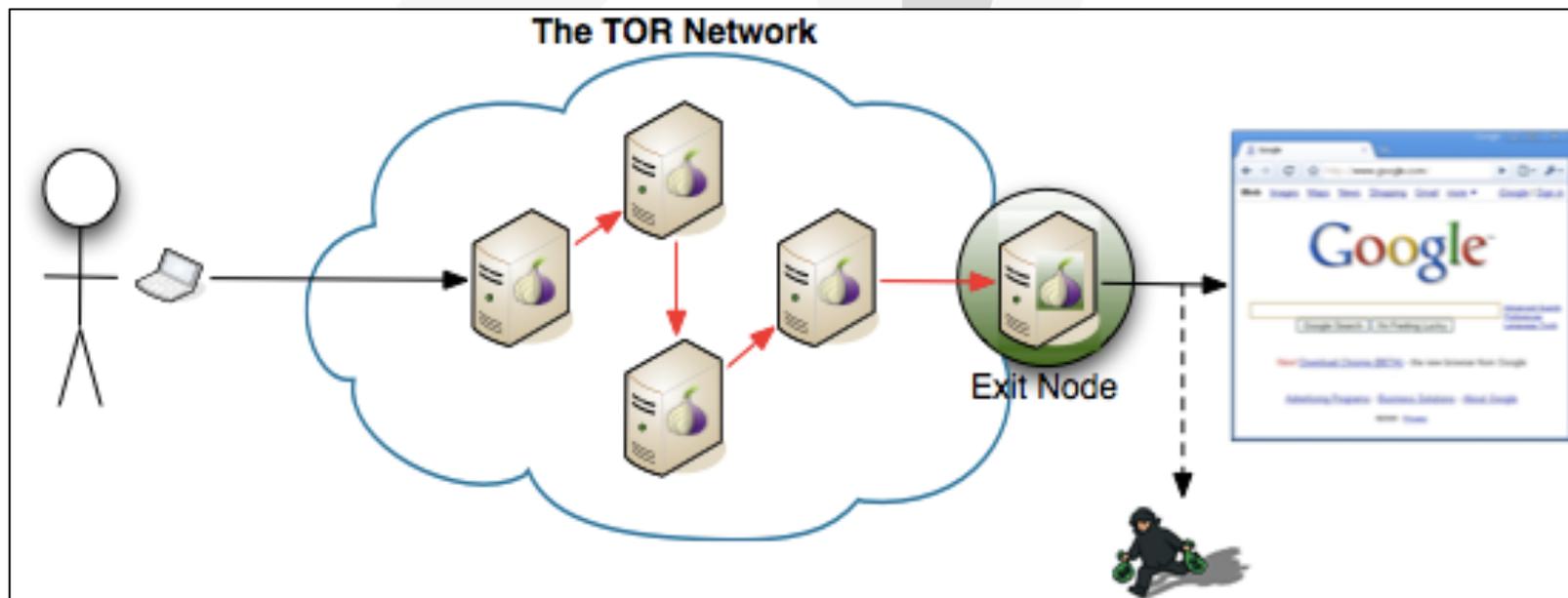


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# The Exit Node Problem

# The Exit Node Problem

- Main vulnerability right now is people masquerading as exit nodes





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# Chinks in the Armor - Tor Attacks and Takedowns

# Chinks in the Armor – Tor Attacks and Takedowns

- In 2007, Metasploit creator H.D. Moore attacked Tor
  - Set up a series of fake nodes that did the opposite of what a real Tor node would do -- they looked at traffic that was passing through and did some tricks to tag that traffic and follow it back to its source
  - The people using Tor could be identified

## Exploitation

By admin  
Created 03/20/2007 - 11:06pm

Testing the limits of vulnerability

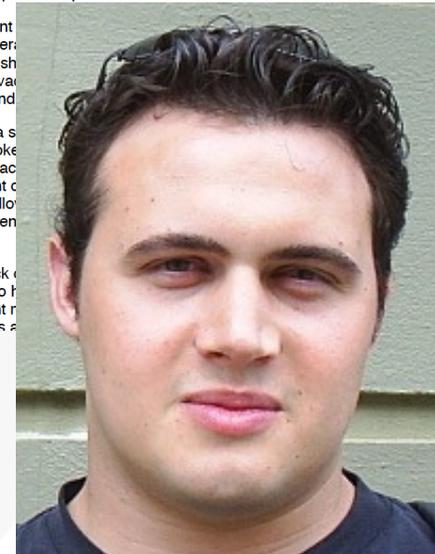
› [annalee@techsploitation.com](mailto:annalee@techsploitation.com) [1]

**TECHSPLOITATION** Among hackers, exploitation is a social good. Exploiting a piece of software means discovering a little chink in its armor, a vulnerability that could allow a crook to slip through and do unwanted things to innocent people's computers. Researchers write an exploit — a little program that takes advantage of the vulnerability — and then show it to everybody involved so that the vulnerability can be patched up.

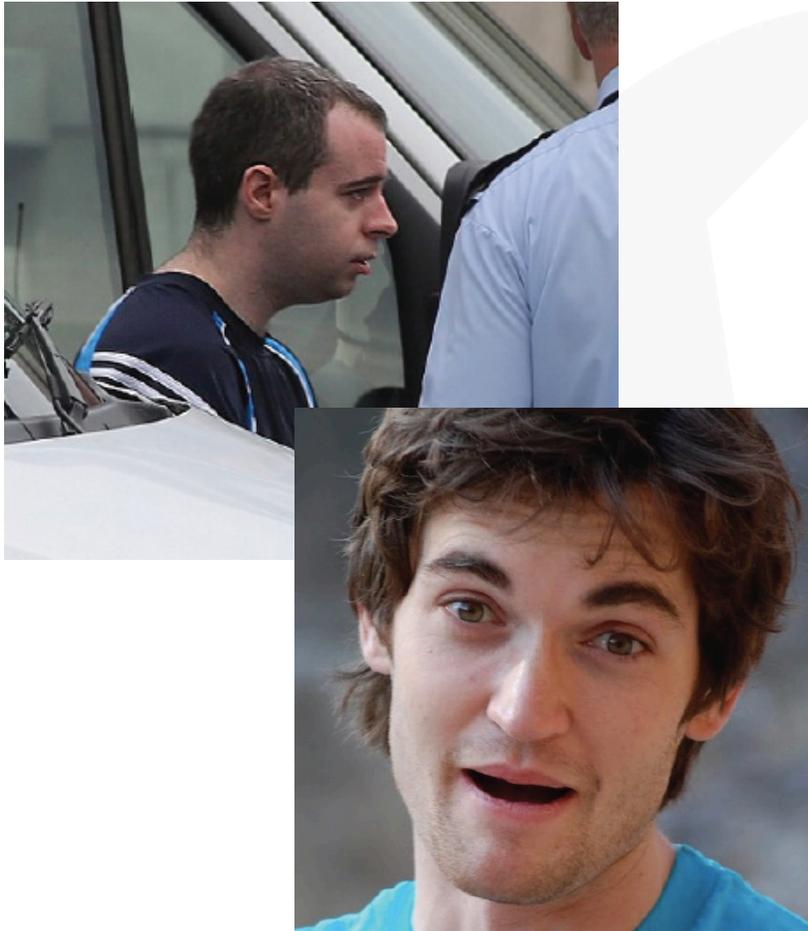
But things are not always so tidy, and a case in point is a researcher named HD Moore. He publicized a vulnerability that facilitates anonymous Web surfing and online publishing for journalists, and people who just want additional privacy. Moore has a special network of protected servers run by thousands of volunteers.

To run his exploit, dubbed Torment, Moore set up a series of fake nodes, the opposite of what a real Tor node would do: they looked at traffic that was passing through and did some tricks to tag that traffic and follow it back to its source. Tor could be identified. Like many exploits, Torment could be used to identify misconfigured Tor. So anyone who has faithfully followed the instructions is still safe — but of course, even the most anal-retentive person should be warned when installing and configuring software.

Moore has said that he decided to launch this attack because he was concerned that pornographers are using the anonymous network to hide their activities. More than that. Via e-mail, he told me, "If anything, I want to issue a warning for anyone who believes their Web traffic is safe."



# *Chinks in the Armor – Tor Attacks and Takedowns*



- 2013 August: FBI Tor Takedown of Child Pornographer Eric Marques (Freedom Hosting)
- 2013 October: FBI Takedown of The Silk Road (and Ross William Ulbricht/Dread Pirate Roberts)



# *Chinks in the Armor – Tor Attacks and Takedowns*

- 2014 July: Black Hat presentation on Tor suddenly cancelled because of vulnerabilities that were going to be disclosed
- 2014 July: Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) offered prize money totaling nearly four million rubles (\$114,000) to anyone who could find a way to identify normally Tor users





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# Does Tor Have a Future?

# Does Tor Have a Future?



vs.





***Questions?***





# ***Thank You!***

**David Vargas, MS, CISSP, CISM, CEH(v7)  
President, VATG Inc. ([dvargas@vatg.com](mailto:dvargas@vatg.com))**

**and**

**Professorial Lecturer, High Technology Crime  
Investigation Program, The George Washington  
University ([dvargas@gwu.edu](mailto:dvargas@gwu.edu) - preferred)**

