



Inkshed was briefly replaced today [March 13, 2014] by a message from a Turkish hacktivist group, but is now up again, both the parent site at www.inkshed.ca and the new site at www.inkshed.ca/blog.

Fortunately, a colleague of Carl Leggo noticed the problem and told Carl, who emailed me; Roger Graves then contacted the server administrators to take down the site and restore its files from their automatic backup. We don't know how the hackers got in, but at least the inner walls of the security system worked. And thanks to all the quick human communication!

A flurry of emails to the CASLL listserv today hypothesized about the cause of the downtime, wondering in fact if the site really had been attacked. Russ Hunt suggested that the term "hacked" might just be an excuse for a glitch in the server. After some speculation about whether Inkshed ranked with Wall Street and the Pentagon as a target, and whether Edward Snowden had been attracted by the dangerous term "Inkshed," Tania Smith brought her administrative experience to the suggestion that "hacking" could mean "hijacking."

"Hijacking" is a good word for what I saw today when I tried to go to the parent page at www.inkshed.ca. As the image here shows, the Inkshed Newsletter page title had been replaced by the words "Hacked by XX" (I'm deliberately substituting XX for the group's name

here so as not to give them further publicity), and the screen was filled with a huge red eagle on a black background, overlaid by a white crescent and star. English text (alternating with Turkish) scrolled down the top centre: "All the muslims are together. The CYBER-WAR will be appeared all the Countries which not respecting Islam . XX promises that they will visit your areas too..." The bottom of the screen gave links to other sections of the hackers' site.

I googled the group by name, and found lots of evidence of hacks on other organizations, many of them not yet fixed. I was also intrigued to find a paper called "Cyber Terror: The Borderless Danger" by Banu Baybars Hawks of Kadir Has University in Istanbul, published in 2011 on the Inter-Disciplinary.net site. Using critical discourse analysis, Hawks discusses how the group gains attention for Muslim grievances by causing temporary disturbances in cyberspace. Hawks describes its members as Turkish software engineers working abroad, and says they deliberately mount attacks that don't leave behind Trojans or destroy the sites, causing no financial or material loss. In fact, he claims they are the "white hats" of responsible hacking, and that the term "hacktivist" is the correct one for their activities, not "cyberterrorists."

I'm ready to concede that point: I felt disturbed and annoyed today, not terrorized. But I still can't give a clear answer to the question a couple of listserv members asked today: "Why on earth would anyone want to do this to Inkshed?"

So Inkshed has now become part of international politics, in a small way. There's no telling now what will happen to the word Inkshed, though I doubt Edward Snowden will be contacting us soon.

Posted by Margaret Procter to the Inkshed WordPress site, March 13, 2014