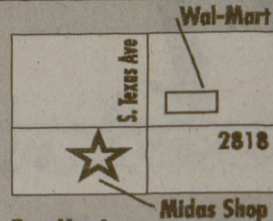


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News

Authorities watching Internet for gang sites

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Gang members are using the Internet to discuss crimes in private chat rooms and offer gang-banger wannabes a chance to enlist by posting membership applications online.

Police nationwide are taking notice. In the last few years, the number of gang-related Websites has grown to tens of thousands, with about 20 percent to 30 percent run by actual gang members, said Det. Chuck Zeglin of the Los Angeles Police Department's career criminal apprehension section.

"We recently found one site for a Crip gang back East that was trying to recruit," Zeglin said. "One site for the P-town Gang in Kentucky has a thing on their site that you click on if you want to be a gang member. There's a resume you have to fill out. But mostly we just find threats."

A growing number of police departments monitor the Web sites, but the information they have found has not led to significant criminal charges.

Police in Miami and the Beach are starting programs which officers routinely use Websites to gather intelligence about places, times and up events.

Most of the sites offer room or message board members glorify their challenge rivals. One Crip the Midwest features a screen. Others show a gang tattoos.

Young people can access them, see their colors and be motivated to join," he said.

Experts say the Internet has failed thus far to help gangs boost enrollment figures or

extend their reach. The National Youth Gang Center estimates there are 720,000 gang members in the country.

Leifel Jackson, founder of the Texas Gang Investigation Association and a detective in the gang unit of the Harris County Sheriff's Department, said the Websites promote violence.

"One site for the P-town Gang in Kentucky has a thing on their site that you click on if you want to be a gang member."

— Chuck Zeglin
Las Angeles police

Lack of housing effecting colleges

HANOVER, N.H. (AP) — A campus housing crunch at schools around the country is so bad that Dartmouth College has offered freshmen the chance to defer their first year in return for a year of free housing.

Fourteen students out of the roughly 2,000 the Ivy League school accepted this year have taken Dartmouth up on its offer — worth about \$5,000 — which was extended because of increased student enrollment.

Other colleges and universities in a similar bind are building more dorms, converting study lounges into bedrooms or even renting hotels.

"A lot of people asked me, 'Aren't you going to be a year behind?'" said Anthony Bramante, who is delaying his entry into Dartmouth. "But others admitted that if given the chance to do it, they would."

Observers cite three reasons for the enrollment increases: the economy, demographics and the Internet.

With the economic slowdown, more high school graduates — estimated at 2.8 million this year — are choosing college over jobs, and the children of baby boomers are reaching college age.

On top of that, the Internet has made applying to college easier. With students applying to more schools, admissions officers have had a tougher time gauging who will attend in the fall, said Barmak Nassirian, a policy analyst at

the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

For instance, Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, is one of 227 schools that all use the same online undergraduate application. Bates has had to house four students, instead of three, in freshmen dorm rooms this year because of increased enrollment.

Overcrowding is "all the more acute at the large public universities and the elite Ivy institutions," Nassirian said.

The problem seems unlikely to go away.

In the next decade, undergraduate and graduate school enrollment is projected to increase 20 percent, from 14.8 million in 1999 to 17.7 million by 2011, according to the American Council on Education.

The council also says more high school seniors today are deciding to go straight to college than in years past. In 1999, the group says, 63 percent of high school seniors went to college within 12 months of graduation compared with 49 percent in 1980.

The enrollment increases may force some colleges to become more selective in the future.

"I suspect that a number of the colleges that are a little higher than they want to be in terms of enrollment will have to alter their admissions rates," said Wylie Mitchell, dean of admissions at Bates. Other educators agree.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Employees accuse of hiding tax returns

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Employees at an IRS processing center in Mellon Bank hid thousands of tax returns or put them with papers shredded apparently because they couldn't keep up with workload, Mellon's chairman said.

At least 40,000 federal tax returns and payments totaling \$810 million were either destroyed at the Pittsburgh office or which handled documents of taxpayers in New England parts of New York state.

The scope of the problem disclosed last week by the Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont., who could take months to determine the details. A federal investigation has begun.

Last month, Mellon lost its contract to run the Pittsburgh Processing Unit because of bank chairman Martin McCall's failure by employees to follow company policy.


Court TV files suit against New York

NEW YORK (AP) — The Court TV network filed a lawsuit Wednesday alleging New York state's ban on cameras in trial courtrooms is unconstitutional.

The lawsuit seeks to strike down a 1952 law that prevents media from using cameras in New York courtrooms.

All 50 states allow cameras to record appeals court proceedings, but 10 states ban them at the trial level. The 40 other states generally allow cameras at the trial level, but usually at the discretion of the judge.

Court TV noted that several New York state trial judges had allowed cameras after ruling the ban is unconstitutional.



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