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The Aum Shinrikyo cult's proselytizing on the Internet.

Good afternoon, dear participants of the conference!

I would like to invite the attention of those present to an overview of some major modern advertising and recruitment technologies that Aum Shinrikyo, a destructive terrorist pseudo-Buddhist cult, is making active use of on the Russian Internet (slide 1).

Modern advertising and recruiting technologies on the Internet have created a new special product, namely, a complex system of signs that affects a human through almost all major channels of perception. Many destructive cults began to use this tool actively and successfully in their recruitment, with Aum Shinrikyo among them.

Advertising and recruiting techniques that destructive cults use in terms of their transmission channels on the Internet can be direct and hidden (slide 2).

Aum Shinrikyo successfully uses the following direct recruiting and advertising techniques (slide 3):

- official website of this destructive cult (the slide shows the main site of the cult (slide 4)
- video channel of the cult (slide 5)
- online broadcasting of meetings (it enables real-time participation in prayer meetings of the destructive cult) (slide 6)
- banner advertising (slide 7)
- recruiting videos (slide 8), (I would like to offer one recruiting video for your attention VIDEO)
- spam (both postal and address (mainly e-mail servers and social networks), spamming is performed on the basis of segmentation of customer-oriented bases (slide 9)
- on-line cult seminars, conferences and prayer meetings (slide 10)
- recruitment through IP-telephony (mainly via Skype and ooVoo) (slide 11)

Hidden advertising and recruiting techniques that the cult makes active use of to recruit new members are following (slide 12):

- contextual advertising (slide 13)
- other hidden anonymous recruiting sites (which do not expressly indicate that they belong to the cult, but all their activities are aimed at recruiting new followers and raising funds for it (two covering sites of Aum Shinrikyo cult are presented on the next two slides (slide 14,15))

Another platform that Aum Shinrikyo cult actively uses for recruitment on the Russian Internet is social networks whose final product is social and group identification represented

mainly by social groups, namely, VK¹ and Facebook. The cult uses the following techniques here (slide 16):

- creating the cult groups and fake accounts for further recruitment into this terrorist organization (slide 17)
- direct advertising and invitations to various recruiting events (this slide gives an example of an invitation to free recruiting lectures of the cult) (slide 18)
- spamming (the slide is an example of an invitation to recruiting lectures) (slide 19)
- viral marketing through various schemes (using some striking audio- and video content) (slide 20)
- recruitment in through groups from the closely related fields (for instance, a user can be recruited into the cult through a disguised group Buddhism) (slide 21)
- blogging (creating of transformed public opinion using biased articles and comments in blogs written by numerous active followers. As a result, target audience receives deliberately false information. Creating themed blogs in social networks, posting comments in other users' blogs and amateur video on YouTube and other video hosting services are among the most widespread methods.) (slide 22)

I would also like to pay special attention to recruitment and indoctrination that Aum Shinrikyo performs in V Kontakte, the most popular social network in Russia, in my report. This process consists of the following stages (slide 23,24):

At the first stage (slide 25), an e-mail robot sends the word 'hello' from a recruiting account to a potential victim. If the victim responds to this message, the correspondence will be forwarded to the real follower of the organization who will carry on communication with potential victims from this moment. The cult's parlance has the term "bhakti" or "donating oneself and one's time to propagate the doctrine of the cult" for recruitment; an alternative of the initial stage of recruitment is possible when potential victims are invited to join one of the cult's social groups through spam and viral marketing that spread advertising videos for recruitment.

At the second stage (slide 26), potential victims are invited to attend a course of free lectures on Buddhism on one of the disguised sites of the cult. Potential followers watch a video instruction on such websites in detail.

At the third stage (slide 27), potential victims take free on-line recruiting video seminars and lectures of the cult within ten days. One lecture takes one hour. Seminars and lectures are held at 8:00 PM Moscow time. Thus, attendees are gradually indoctrinated in the organization's statements within ten days.

At the fourth stage (slide 28), further studying of lectures is offered to victims, but for money by making a donation of \$2 via electronic settlement system, for example, Webmoney or Qiwi.

At the fifth stage (slide 29), victims study video lectures about Shoko Asahara, Aum Shinrikyo's guru, and continues his or her being indoctrinated in the cult.

At the sixth stage (slide 30), lecturers who supervise victims collect personal information about new followers and their contacts and begin to communicate with them personally on a daily basis via VoIP with them. In addition, every lecturer has a certain number of learners.

At the seventh stage (slide 31), new members of the organization begin to perform religious practices of the cult, for example, sacrifice for the guru, asanas, qigong, evening worshipping, Sunday worshipping the guru, all this happens on-line via VoIP. At the same time, victims study reading materials of the cult in detail, Shoko Asahara writings, and

¹ VK (originally VKontakte, [Russian](#): ВКОНТАКТЕ, literally "in touch") is the largest Russian social network in Europe

transfer money to the organization via electronic settlement systems. Donation in this stage amounts to about \$150 monthly.

At the eighth stage (slide 32), after about two months of indoctrination, doing the bhakti practice is offered to a new follower of the terrorist organization. It means the recruitment of new members of the cult through spamming and communication with potential victims in social networks.

At the ninth stage (slide 33), new members of the cult are invited to a closed workshop in one of the headquarters of the terrorist organization four months after the first lecture. This workshop costs \$500.

At the tenth stage (slide 34), followers are invited to away events of the terrorist cult in other countries that cost around 1000 to 1500 dollars after six to eight months. Giving online lectures for recruiting or becoming an instructor for asanas and qigong via VoIP can also be offered.

This way (slide 35), we see how Aum Shinrikyo, a destructive terrorist pseudo-Buddhist cult, actively uses modern Internet technologies to recruit new followers into their organization and suppresses, changes, and then destroys the ideas, concepts and beliefs in the minds of their victims that are undesirable for the cult with the help of modern electronic technologies; then it inculcates and solidifies the views, attitudes and ideas desirable for the terrorist organization among its followers. In the meantime, it actively raises funds for their operation.

Thank you for your attention! (slide 36)