L12: Cybercrime Assignment

IST 110

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Cybercrime is still crime, and as such should be observed in the same lens as "traditional" crime. This being said, repeat offenders should not be levied with harsher punishments, however, those punishments should be made with consideration into the weight of the crimes committed.

Cybercrime has opened the door – especially for younger individuals – to more accessible means of committing transgressions of all forms more than ever. Consider the following factors: Increased accessibility, anonymity, and number of targets. Additionally, it has been found that the 'thrill' factor of committing such crimes is perhaps one of the strongest motivators. (Goldsmith & Wall, 2022, pp. 101-107) Now without even needing to leave one's home anyone can commit any number of crimes.

Despite this increased access, it's useful to consider overall crime statistics. In 2020, the FBI recorded a total of 1,277,696 violent crimes, and 6,452,038 property crimes resulting in losses of about $17.5 billion. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2021) Meanwhile, the 2020 Internet Crime Report from the FBI recorded 791,790 cybercrime complaints and estimated losses from cybercrime to be around $4.2 billion. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2021). So despite this ease of access, the numbers do show cybercrimes to be a significant portion of, but not the dominant form of crime.

Additionally, several findings related to responding to crime suggest that increased severity of punishments do not result in increased deterrence. Rather, it is the chance simply of being convicted in general – regardless of the punishment – that has the greatest impact on the likelihood that an individual will commit, or re-commit a given crime be it on or off-line. (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016)

As such, this all suggests that attention should be towards preventive measures rather than simply adjusting the levels of punishments established for each form of crime. Agencies should seek to study instances to help and increase the effectiveness of existing preventive measures if they truly seek to deter cybercrime instead of simply reacting to it.

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