

Who Are You?

Recently we've had to deal with another round of WikiLeaks leaks as reported in the news: *For insiders and outsiders alike, the latest quarter-million documents unveiled by WikiLeaks are a treasure trove of interesting details...This is troubling, but it also is probably unavoidable in a digital world, with or without WikiLeaks (USAToday, 12/1/2010).*

Most of what we read captioned as World News while interesting or even disturbing isn't relevant to our daily living. While it may have some effect on us in terms of diplomacy and national safety in all actuality it serves mainly as a momentary diversion over a morning cup of coffee.

We have WikiLeaks because we have the Internet. We have the Internet because at one time it was part of our national defense systems. In the last decades the Internet has become indispensable to and formative for our culture and society. It forms and molds our national identity. FaceBook, UTube, Twitter, LiveStreaming and all the rest is more about social networking and connectedness than about information and knowledge.

Within this virtual reality not only do we have the possibility of gaining access to a networking that can enhance who we are as well as what we can do; but, we find ourselves vulnerable to "predatorization." Just as in the real world in the virtual world along with the good come the bad.

Last week I experienced the bad. I was solicited via my email account saying I needed to update my account or have it terminated in 7 days. The perpetrator of Window Live Team convincingly scammed me to give out information including my password. Feeling I had secured my place in the data base of hotmail I received a phone call from a friend less than an hour later informing me that my email site had been taken over. It had not only been taken over another password had been put in place so I had no access to it at all.

Later in the day I received another phone call from a different friend asking me where I was. When I informed them I was in Marion they said they had received an email from me saying I was in Madrid, Spain and needed them to wire me 2,000 Euros! I felt electronically raped! Two days later with the help of a professional computer specialist and several hundred dollars of expense I was able to recapture my site and secure it. Now less than a week later I received another email fraudulently saying I need to update my email account in less than 48 hours or lose it! I was burned once through gullibility but not to be burned twice through stupidity.

I write this to you this day as a heads up! It's too easy to get scammed even when your eyes are open. I hope MSN, Windows Live and Hotmail will do something about it but the nature of the Internet is such that along with the blessings of its virtual reality there are sharks swimming around in its extensive bulk of virtual space.

Another thing I have revisited in the last week is that virtual reality is just that virtual—a projection at best of the real. No matter how hard we try to get our identity from the Internet we come up short. We are who we are not because of it but in spite of it. And while I am glad I recaptured my email identity (site) and all the networking of names and documents it contained, I recognize that it's not who I am or even what I am. Finding the answer to that question necessitates plugging into a different kind of space definable by the letters G_O_D@GOD.com/org/gov///