

“100% sure fixed matches”: Exploring the environmental design of match-fixing websites and their networks

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Over the past few years, many human activities have made cyberspace their preferred environment. Among them, our study focuses on the betting environment and, in particular, on match-fixing websites. These sites claim to be capable of selling tips about sports events that are fixed. Basically, they act as vendors of confidential sources that should allow punters to place 100% sure bets. Our study hypothesizes that cyber places of match-fixing tips are specifically designed to facilitate deviant behaviors. They share a set of fifteen environmental features which do not belong to regulated on-line betting platforms. Findings on 76 match-fixing websites corroborate our hypothesis and they support the relevance of environmental criminology theories applied to cybercrime. A further exploration through social network analysis shows that match-fixing websites are strongly clustered. These results seem to suggest that match-fixing tip websites look more like a fraud scheme than an illicit market.