

Cybercrime Kingpins and the commoditization of cybercrime

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At the heart of the ever-expanding cyberthreat landscape has been the expansion of a cybercrime ecosystem around data breaches. Whilst considerable attention has been placed upon the consequences of companies of having weak security allowing data breaches to occur, relatively little attention has been placed upon what happens to the data once stolen. Much of the data stolen is subsequently being used by to fuel, facilitate and commit cybercrimes and it finds expression in the growing market for crimes-as-a-service which offenders can hire from other offender groups to commit cybercrimes. In this process of 'commoditizing' cybercrime, cybercrime services can now be literally bought off the shelf as-a-service. So, in addition to primary offender groups (e.g. the hackers, fraudsters and protesters etc.) are a range of secondary key criminal actors, the 'brokers', who provide crime services to help primary offenders commit cybercrime, but for a price. These crime 'brokerships' each provide distinct services and are dominated by kingpins. By mapping out the various roles (the kingpins) and their interdependency between parts of this ecosystem it is possible to both improve understanding of organized crime online and also suggest more effective ways of focusing law enforcement resources.