



About Booz Allen

Booz Allen Hamilton has been at the forefront of strategy and technology consulting for 95 years. Providing a broad range of services in strategy, operations, organization and change, information technology, systems engineering, and program management, Booz Allen is committed to delivering results that endure.

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Virtual Identity

Virtual communities across the Internet are redefining identity. Aliases are no longer limited to criminals and spies. Manufactured or manipulated virtual identities, combined with anonymous services and networks, provide fertile ground in which a variety of threats can grow. Criminals use these systems as secure channels for anonymous communications, finance, and black markets with worldwide connectivity.

Virtual Identity is the manifestation of one's self in the digital world of e-commerce, e-mail, social networking, and virtual worlds. Identity in our digital age is no longer tied to static, physical anchors, such as driver's licenses or passports, or to nebulous entities, such as one's reputation in the village. Virtual worlds and social networks have created playgrounds for interpersonal interaction. Gender, nationality, names, and appearances are all flexible and replaceable and require no relationship to the real world. These new identities are also portable and increasingly have the ability to transcend their origins and move to other social networks, other virtual worlds, and even other web pages.

How quickly a regulatory, intelligence, or law enforcement agency understands and responds to these growing threats will determine its effectiveness in countering this new criminal methodology. Policy makers also need to understand the implications of a populace and worker base that are using virtual identities daily to interact with each other, with companies, and with their agencies.

Booz Allen can help you be ready for what's next

At Booz Allen Hamilton, a leading strategy and technology consulting firm, we have a deep understanding of our clients' missions and years of experience solving our clients' problems across the public and private sectors. Through our identity management support of the Department of Defense, the Intelligence Community, civil agencies, and corporations, we have led the integration of identity policies, IT-related identities management, and operational identities to meet challenges that largely did not exist 15 years ago.

Our approach and capabilities

To address the identity challenges facing US government organizations, our experts have developed a unique, holistic approach—the Integrated Identity Framework. By applying the Framework as a consulting tool, we help customers understand the complete set of issues associated with identity challenges to develop comprehensive solutions. We have quickly assumed a leadership position helping the US government understand and respond to the threats and opportunities presented by the emergence of Virtual Identity.

Ready for what's next. www.boozallen.com

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The traditional approach to verifying identities by managing an individual's traits and characteristics is rooted in the physical world and is now inadequate to manage the evolving nature and threat profile of Virtual Identity. An identity comprises a group of individual identity elements that are important in establishing and understanding a full identity profile. An individual's fundamental identity elements include the biographic and biometric who, what, when, and where of an individual's life, including birth documents, fingerprints, travel history, residences, and medical and financial information. Virtual Identity may include some, any, or all of these identity elements. It might be a completely fabricated avatar (a graphical image that represents a person online) in a virtual world, or it may be the embarrassingly complete Facebook page of a naive teenager. Virtual Identity is a new manifestation of an identity, and it presents serious ramifications from new threats and opportunities.

Virtual Identity examples include:

- **devouchka.lexenstar@gmail.com:** Free and anonymous e-mail accounts are ubiquitous and allow the projection of whatever identity or pseudonym a user creates.
- **Devouchka Lexenstar:** An avatar in Second Life or another virtual world might have links to its own web page or project its identity through Twitter or other connected services.
- **Financial Services:** PayPal, CashU, and hundreds of other Internet payment systems offer varying degrees of anonymity and traceability.
- **Logins, Passwords, and Certificates:** Websites and other resources drive access through these control mechanisms, which may be tied to a user's true identity.

These examples exhibit the range of threats and opportunities—from recreation and the convenience of e-commerce to identity theft, hacking, and money laundering. Understanding and managing this new landscape will increasingly be crucial to the success and safety of individuals and organizations in the new millennium.



A group of avatars—a form of Virtual Identity—at a concert in Second Life

Threats posed to organizations by virtual identities vary depending on organizations' missions. Law Enforcement and the Intelligence Community might seek to reveal the true identity of adversaries and to conceal certain resources. Agencies concerned with cyber attacks might primarily be concerned with protecting their legitimate identity credentials and defending against incursions by hostile virtual identities. Civil agencies might be concerned with protecting the privacy of citizens using their virtual identities.

Whether you're managing today's issues or looking beyond the horizon, count on us to help you be ready for what's next.