

“A Message from the Inspector General: Audit of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Strategy and Efforts to Disrupt Illegal Dark Web Activities,” December 2020

Hello, I’m Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today, my office released a report on the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s, or FBI’s, strategy and effort to disrupt illegal activity on the dark web. We found that the FBI relies on four of its operational units to execute individual strategies for dark web investigations – with varying degrees of comprehensiveness – rather than developing an FBI-wide strategy to disrupt those illegal activities.

As a result of this approach, we identified numerous inefficiencies and redundancies. For example, the FBI does not have a central unit to develop and deploy technology-based solutions for use on the dark web. This decentralization resulted in operational units seeking tools independently without a mechanism to share the product of their efforts.

We believe that an FBI-wide approach for dark web investigations would:

- better ensure clarity on investigative responsibilities,
- enable cost savings,
- highlight training opportunities,
- offer strategic continuity, and
- provide baseline data collection guidelines to enable the FBI to better report its overall dark web successes.

To read the report and all of our findings, visit our website, oig.justice.gov or go to oversight.gov.

Thank you for joining me today.

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