
Many people in the United States have completed their Thanksgiving weekend rituals of gathering with family, overeating, shopping for Black Friday sales and catching up on sleep. But there’s another custom that takes place every Monday by the Department of Homeland Security and it’s not shopping for Cyber Monday deals.

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) works to prevent terrorism and enhance security, especially at the borders of our country. But it also works to guard against illicit trade, travel and finance. In ‘Project Cyber Monday 3’ this law enforcement agency, coupled with agencies in Belgium, Denmark, France, Romania, and the United Kingdom have seized 132 domain names on November 26, 2012 that were illegally selling counterfeit merchandise on the web to unaware buyers.

"These websites were set up to dupe consumers into unknowingly buying counterfeit goods as part of the holiday shopping season… This is the third year that the [Intellectual Properties Rights] IPR Center has targeted websites selling counterfeit products online in conjunction with Cyber Monday. An iteration of Operation In Our Sites (IOS), Cyber Monday 3 seized 101 websites and yielded one arrest. Additionally, recognizing the global nature of Internet crime, this year the IPR Center partnered with Europol, who, through its member countries, executed coordinated seizures of foreign-based top-level domains such as .eu, .be, .dk, .fr, .ro and .uk. This effort is titled Project Transatlantic and resulted in 31 domain name seizures."
ICE also conducts this ritual just before the Super Bowl. Their goal is to protect the intellectual property of creators like Nike or Disney from being sold as bogus products to consumers who do not realize they are purchasing fake goods.

God has provided the church with rituals to protect us from being sold fraudulent spiritual merchandise. These ordinances, such as baptism, remind us of our utter dependence on Christ for cleansing from sin. There are no Cyber Monday deals when it comes to the kingdom of heaven. No matter how low of a price each of the devil’s offers may be, Jesus has paid it all.

When we participate in the rites of the church, our faith is strengthened. The rituals of baptism, foot-washing, and the Lord’s Supper help to keep us from counterfeit beliefs that may be tantalizing to those unaware that a criminal deceiver wants to break our security in Christ.

~cr

1. ICE

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