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## Real sentences for stealing virtual property

### Landmark cases in the Netherlands

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In cases that could affect European law, virtual crimes have been given real-life sentences.

A Dutch court has given two boys community service after they forced another boy to give up items to them in the game Runescape.

The case combined the real and virtual worlds - because although it was virtual property that was stolen, the boys actually attacked their victim in his own bedroom.

The 15-year-old and the 14-year-old were sentenced to 200 and 160 hours of community service, respectively.

But what is significant is that the Runescape goods were treated as though they were material items: "These virtual goods are goods (under Dutch law), so this is theft", said the ruling.

In another case, in the US, Linden Labs, the company behind virtual world Second Life, repossessed virtual land from a user named Marc Bragg.

The company claimed Bragg had bought the land by fiddling with URLs and making purchases on lots that Linden Labs didn't mean to be publicly available, explains Ars Technica.

Bragg sued, and Linden Labs ended up reinstating the land.

