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FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

U.S. Department of Justice United States Attorney District of Massachusetts - Press Release

Author(s)

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Description

A article about David LaMacchia's indictment and the charges he was faced with.

Body

Boston, Ma ... A federal grand jury returned a felony indictment today charging an MIT student in a computer fraud scheme resulting in the piracy of an estimated million dollars in business and entertainment computer software.

United States Attorney Donald K. Stern and FBI Special Agent In Charge Richard Swenson announced today that David Lamacchia, age 20, currently a junior at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was charged in a one count felony indictment with conspiring to commit wire fraud. The indictment charges that between November 21, 1993 and January 5, 1994 Lamacchia operated a computer bulletin board service that permitted users to copy copyrighted business and entertainment software without paying to purchase the software. The bulletin board was operated without authorization on MIT computer work stations and was accessible to users

worldwide over the Internet, a collection of computer networks connecting educational, government, and commercial sites around the world. Losses from the illegal distribution and pirating of the software are estimated to exceed a million dollars.

U.S. Attorney Stern stated, "The pirating of business and entertainment software through clandestine computer bulletin boards is tremendously costly to software companies, and by extension to their employees and to the economy. We need to respond to the culture that no one is hurt by these thefts and that there is nothing wrong with pirating software."

Stern continued, "In this new electronic environment it has become increasingly difficult to protect intellectual property rights. Therefore, the government views large scale cases of software piracy, whether for profit or not, as serious crimes and will devote such resources as are necessary to protect those rights."

The investigation leading to this indictment was conducted by special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation with the cooperation of MIT. The case will be prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeanne M. Kempthorne, a member of Stern's Major Crimes Unit.

Notes

Date: April 7, 1994.

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Case Study / Scenario

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Privacy and Surveillance

Discipline(s)

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Computer, Math, and Physical Sciences

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