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U.S. Department of Justice
Northern District of Ohio
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United States Attorney
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Ohio Man Attacked NASA Computer System Shutting Down Email Server

Emily M. Sweeney, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, today announced that a one-count information was filed in U.S. District Court in Cleveland, Ohio, charging Dino A. Amato, age 37, of 6820 Lafayette Road, Medina, Ohio, with knowingly violating the regulations and orders of the Administrator of NASA for the protection and security of property and equipment in the custody of NASA, and property and equipment under contract with NASA. According to Court documents, between November 5, 2001, and November 14, 2001, Dino A. Amato, while employed as a contract employee with Affiliated Computer Services at the NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio, knowingly and willfully violated NASA regulations by downloading a compressed or 'zipped' computer file called 'ZIP-42' from the Internet, and transmitted said zipped file to an e-mail account on the NASA e-mail server on at least seven different occasions, knowing that the zipped file in question would cause the computer system to drastically slow down or completely stop processing e-mail messages at the Glenn Research Center.

According to Court documents, Amato's actions caused a disruption in the flow of electronic communications on the Glenn Research Center e-mail server, and NASA's computer security department incurred losses of approximately $12,000 in inspecting, diagnosing and repairing the e-mail server. The maximum statutory penalty for a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 799 (Violating the Rules and Regulations of NASA) is up to 1 year imprisonment, a fine of up to $100,000, or both. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert W. Kern, following an investigation by NASA's Office of the Inspector General.

An information is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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