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United States Attorney's Office Creates Computer Crimes Section

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney John K. Vincent today announced the creation of a Computer Crimes Section to prosecute high-technology and intellectual property offenses.

The new section will handle the prosecution of crimes such as computer intrusions, denial of service attacks, virus and worm proliferation, Internet fraud, and telecommunications fraud. Prosecutors in the new section will also be responsible for prosecuting intellectual property offenses, including copyright and trademark infringement, software piracy, theft of trade secrets and economic espionage.

The newly created section is a product of the Department of Justice's dedication to fighting computer-related and intellectual property crimes by the creation of specialized prosecutorial units. In addition to prosecuting high-technology offenses, prosecutors in the Computer Crimes Section will be responsible for providing regional training programs to increase expertise among federal, state and local law enforcement.

The Computer Crimes Section will also work to promote positive working relationships with the high-tech community to encourage victims to report computer crime and intellectual property offenses to law enforcement. Because the Eastern District of California is home to numerous high-tech companies, major universities and military bases, it has become a popular target to cybercriminals.

The Computer Crimes Section will be headed by Assistant United States Attorneys Christopher Sonderby in Sacramento and Jon Conklin in Fresno, each of whom has been focusing on prosecuting complex computer crimes cases. Mr. Sonderby has prosecuted significant Internet and computer fraud cases, including the first Internet shill bidding case in the country (involving the sale of a fake Richard Diebenkorn painting on eBay for $135,000) and a $50 million dollar international fraud case involving the sale of "prime bank" notes by the Tri-West Investment Club over the Internet. Mr. Conklin has also handled a host of Internet fraud and computer intrusion cases, including cases in which individuals hacked into computer systems of businesses and intentionally destroyed files, and a significant copyright case involving misuse of software products of the Microsoft Corporation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark L. Krotoski, who will also be in the section, has prosecuted and investigated prominent computer hacking cases, including a

pending prosecution of alleged Russian hacker Aleksey Ivanov for a host of computer-intrusion offenses, as well as a case involving thousands of bootlegged video-tapes that is one of the first nationwide prosecutions under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

"We have been focusing on cybercrime for some time now," said United States Attorney Vincent. "It is an area of growing concern, however, and we intend to attack it even more aggressively. These prosecutors, because of their training and experience, bring a high degree of expertise and professionalism to the Computer Crimes Section, and they are dedicated to vigorously prosecuting those responsible for cybercrime in the district."

Inquiries can be made to Christopher Sonderby in Sacramento at (916) 554-2827 and to Jon Conklin in Fresno at (559) 498-7272.

A copy of this press release may be found on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae/home.

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