United States Attorney's Office District of Connecticut
Press Release

August 14, 2008

MASTERMIND OF ELABORATE INTERNET "PHISHING" SCHEME SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON

Nora R. Dannehy, Acting United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that MICHAEL DOLAN, 24, formerly of West Haven, Connecticut and North Miami Beach, Florida, was sentenced yesterday, August 13, by United States District Judge Alvin W. Thompson in Hartford to 84 months of imprisonment, followed by three years of supervised release for his participation in an elaborate internet "phishing" scheme that targeted and victimized America Online subscribers. On August 22, 2007, DOLAN pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit fraud in connection with access devices, and one count of aggravated identity theft.

According to documents filed with the Court and statements made in court, from approximately 2002 through 2006, DOLAN conspired with others to obtain names, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, Social Security account numbers, and other private personal and financial information through an internet "spamming" and "phishing" scheme that targeted AOL subscribers. "Phishing" is the act of sending fraudulent email in an attempt to scam individuals into surrendering private information that will be used for identity theft. The scheme involved the use of software to collect AOL account names from chat rooms and to "spam" those accounts with counterfeit emails, including emails purporting to convey electronic greeting cards from Hallmark.com. Through this scheme, an AOL subscriber who attempted to open one of the purported greeting cards would unwittingly download a software trojan that would prevent the subscriber from accessing AOL without first entering information including the subscriber's name, credit card number, bank account number, and Social Security account number. The subscriber's information would then be used by DOLAN and others to order products online and to produce counterfeit debit cards, which were used at ATM machines and retail outlets such as gas stations.

In May 2004, DOLAN was sentenced to two years of probation after pleading guilty in Eastern District of New York to one misdemeanor count of accessing a protected computer without authorization. In April 2006, Judge Thompson revoked DOLAN's probation and

sentenced DOLAN to nine months of imprisonment after ruling that DOLAN had violated the conditions of his probation by failing to report to his probation officer and by making numerous trips out of Connecticut without permission, including at least one trip overseas.

In addition, while incarcerated after being charged for his participation in this phishing scheme, DOLAN induced his girlfriend to perjure herself before a federal grand jury, attempted to bribe a co-defendant to exonerate him falsely, and threatened to kill someone he believed to be a Government informant.

"This defendant has shown no respect for the law or the several hundred victims of his phishing schemes, and a long term of incarceration is appropriate," stated Acting U.S. Attorney Dannehy. "Identity theft schemes wreak havoc on the lives of victims, and federal law enforcement, with the cooperation of our state and local partners and internet service providers, are committed to investigating and prosecuting these crimes to the full extent of the law."

Acting U.S. Attorney Dannehy also announced that **KEITH RIEDEL**, 21, of Winter Haven, Florida, was sentenced today by Judge Thompson to time served, followed by three years of supervised release and nine months of home confinement, for his participation in the phishing conspiracy. On March 16, 2007, RIEDEL pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit fraud in connection with access devices.

A second co-defendant, Daniel Mascia, is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Thompson on September 10, 2008. The remaining three co-defendants, Charlie Blount, Jr., Richard D'Andrea, and Thomas Taylor, Jr., are scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Thompson on October 31, 2008.

Acting U.S. Attorney Dannehy noted the extraordinary investigative assistance provided by the West Haven Police Department and EarthLink's abuse team.

This case was investigated by the West Haven Police Department, the United States Postal Inspection Service, the United States Secret Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Edward Chang.

CONTACT: **U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**
Tom Carson
(203) 821-3722
thomas.carson@usdoj.gov