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Minnesota Man Sentenced to 18 Months in Prison for Creating and Unleashing a Variant of the MS Blaster Computer Worm

JEFFREY LEE PARSON, 19, of Hopkins, Minnesota, was sentenced today to 18 months in prison, 3 years of supervised release and 100 hours of community service for intentionally causing and attempting to cause damage to a protected computer. U.S. District Court Judge Marsha Pechman will determine the amount of restitution PARSON owes at a court hearing February 10, 2005. PARSON was indicted in September 2003 for sending out a variant of the MS Blaster computer worm on August 12, 2003. PARSON's worm is referred to by a number of different names including the "B" or "teekids" variant of the MS Blaster worm. In sentencing PARSON Judge Pechman stated "What you've done is a terrible thing. Aside from injuring people and their computers you shook the foundation of technology."

PARSON admitted that he created his worm by modifying the original MS Blaster worm and adding a mechanism that allowed him to have complete access to certain infected computers. PARSON then infected approximately fifty computers that he had previously hijacked with his worm. From those fifty computers, PARSON's worm spread to other individual computers. PARSON's worm then directed those infected computers to launch an attack against a Microsoft web site. Attorneys for the government calculate that more than 48,000 computers were infected by PARSON's worm.

"This defendant's malicious attack on the information superhighway caused an economic and technological disruption that was felt around the world," said Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray of the Criminal Division. "Today's sentence demonstrates to criminals intent on releasing computer viruses and worms that they will be found and appropriately punished."

In sentencing PARSON to eighteen months, Judge Pechman said she considered his unique circumstances: that he was just three weeks past his 18th birthday when he released the worm, his history of mental illness, and that his parents had failed to monitor or guide him on his computer activities. Pechman told PARSON his community service had to be through face-to-face contact with others and restricted his use of computers to only educational and business purposes. She told him "No video games, no chat rooms. I don't want you to have anonymous

friends, I want you to have real world friends." She also stressed that part of PARSON'S supervised release will involve a mental health program.

"The U.S. Secret Service is very pleased with today's sentencing announcement. This case is an early example of close cooperation at the senior executive level between our agency, the FBI, and the US Attorney's Office, and it is a model for the kind of cooperation required to solve cases with such international impact," stated Wallace Shields, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service in Seattle.

The MS Blaster worm case was investigated by the Northwest Cyber Crime Task Force (NWCCTF) and, in particular, by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the United States Secret Service (USSS). Key support for the investigation also was provided by the Department of Justice's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section and several United States Attorney's Offices around the country, particularly the District of Minnesota and the Southern District of California.

Assistant United States Attorney Annette L. Hayes prosecuted the case. For additional information please contact Emily Langlie, Public Affairs Officer for the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Washington at (206) 553-4110.

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