Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas
Tim Johnson • Acting United States Attorney

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EX-HOSTGATOR.COM EMPLOYEE SENTENCED FOR COMPUTER INTRUSION

(HOUSTON, Texas) - A former employee of Hostgator.com has been sentenced following his conviction related to exceeding his access and intentionally causing damages to Hostgator.com, acting United States Attorney Tim Johnson and FBI-Houston Special Agent in Charge Andrew R. Bland III announced today. Cliff L. Wade, 37, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Harold L. Murphy of the Northern District of Georgia.

Wade was indicted by a federal grand jury in the Southern District of Texas on June 16, 2008. The case was transferred to the Northern District of Georgia following his arrest on June 19, 2008 in Atlanta, Ga. On Nov. 16, 2008, Wade entered a formal plea of guilty to one count of committing computer intrusion.

In early October 2007, Wade, a support technician employed at the Houston based web-hosting company, moved to Atlanta and began working for a competitor company without ever notifying Hostgator he had ended his employment status. A web-hosting company provides server space, web services and maintenance for web sites of individuals or companies that do not have their own web servers. Thereafter, Wade gained access into the Hostgator system and then knowingly executed several command and code functions to intentionally impair the integrity of the customer support network. Hostgator.com never authorized the execution or transmission of these commands. As a result of the intrusion, the defendant caused Hostgator to incur a loss in excess to $5,000 in value. Hostgator.com's losses include a significant loss of revenue as well as financial loss due to the damage assessments and restoration of the data and programs.

Wade was sentenced to eight months imprisonment, a $100 special assessment and a three-year term of supervised release for his involvement in the scheme to intentionally damage Hostgator, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §1030(a)(5)(A)(I).

The conviction of Wade is the result of the investigation conducted by the FBI and prosecution by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lawrence Sommerfeld, Northern District of Georgia, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Bret W. Davis, Southern District of Texas.

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