United States Attorney

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 23, 2009
www.usdoj.gov/usao/ma

Contact: Christina Diiorio-Sterling
Phone: (617) 748-3356
E-mail: usama.media@usdoj.gov

Hacker Sentenced For Providing Data Theft Tool in National Identity Theft Case

BOSTON, MA - A New York man was sentenced late yesterday in U.S. District Court for providing a "sniffer" program used to monitor and capture data including customers' credit and debit card information as it traveled across corporate computer networks.

Carmen M. Ortiz and Steven Ricciardi, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Secret Service, announced that STEPHEN WATT, age 25, of New York, was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment, to be followed by 3 years of supervised release, a condition of which was electronic monitoring of any computer use. He was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of $171.5 million dollars. WATT pled guilty to conspiracy charges on October 28, 2008.

WATT was a member of a conspiracy which, between 2003 and 2008, unlawfully gained electronic access to corporate computer networks using various techniques, downloaded customers' credit and debit card information, and fraudulently used that information and sold the information to others for fraudulent use. WATT modified and provided a "sniffer" program used by the conspirators to monitor and capture the data crossing TJX's computer network.

The case was investigated by the United States Secret Service. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen Heymann Chief of Ortiz's Computer Crime Unit in collaboration with Jennifer Ellickson and Kimberly Keifer Peretti of the U.S. Department of Justice's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section.