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## **VIRGINIA MAN SENTENCED TO 96 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES**

WASHINGTON – A Bedford, Va., man was sentenced today to 96 months in prison and lifetime supervised release for transporting, receiving and possessing child pornography, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Timothy J. Heaphy of the Western District of Virginia.

John Michael Carter, 42, pleaded guilty on Aug. 5, 2010, in U.S. District Court in the Western District of Virginia to one count of transportation of child pornography, one count of receipt of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography.

At the plea hearing, Carter admitted that he was a member of two online bulletin boards dedicated to the trading of child pornography. After he was identified by law enforcement authorities, Carter admitted to viewing child pornography on his computer, including still pictures and movies that featured young girls having sex with adult males. Forensic examination of Carter's computer revealed the presence of files containing images of child pornography and search terms associated with child pornography websites.

Carter was identified through "Operation Joint Hammer," the U.S. component of an ongoing global enforcement operation targeting transnational rings of child pornographers. The operation has led to the arrest of more than 60 people in the United States involved in the trade of child pornography. Operation Joint Hammer was initiated through evidence developed by European law enforcement and shared with U.S. counterparts by Europol and Interpol. The European portion of this global enforcement effort, "Operation Koala," was launched after the discovery of the activities of several people in Europe who were abusing children and producing photographs of the abuse for commercial gain. Further investigation unveiled a number of online child pornography rings.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS). Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafechildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov).

This case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Anitha S. Ibrahim of CEOS and Assistant U.S. Attorney Nancy Healey of the Western District of Virginia. The investigation is being handled by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

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