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60TH FELONY CONVICTION OBTAINED IN SOFTWARE PIRACY CRACKDOWN **“OPERATION FASTLINK”**

WASHINGTON – The 60th felony conviction from Operation Fastlink, a major Department of Justice initiative to combat online piracy worldwide, was announced today by Acting Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division Rita M. Glavin and Acting U.S. Attorney Nora R. Dannehy of the District of Connecticut.

Bryan Thomas Black, 30, of Waterloo, Ill., pleaded guilty today to one count of conspiracy to commit criminal infringement of a copyright for his involvement in a multinational software piracy organization that was targeted by investigators as part of “Operation Fastlink”, an internationally coordinated 18-month investigation. Black will be sentenced by the Honorable Ellen Bree Burns on May 26, 2009, at which time he faces up to five years of in prison, a fine of \$250,000 and three years of supervised release.

In pleading guilty today, Black admitted that, for nearly four years, he was a participant in the “warez scene,” an underground online community made up of individuals and organized groups who engage in the large scale reproduction, modification and distribution of copyrighted software through the Internet. In the warez scene, Black served as the person who would obtain new video game releases and circumvent the digital copyright protections so that the software could then be reproduced and distributed on the Internet. Black also admitted that during the course of the conspiracy, he downloaded thousands of pirated copies of copyrighted works from various Web sites, known as warez sites, knowing that his and his co-conspirators’ actions were unlawful.

Operation Fastlink has resulted in more than 120 search warrants executed in 12 countries; the confiscation of hundreds of computers and illegal online distribution hubs; and the removal of more than \$50 million worth of illegally copied software, games, movies and music from illicit distribution channels. Operation Fastlink is the culmination of multiple FBI undercover investigations targeting individuals involved in the illegal reproduction and distribution of movies, games, business software and music.

Operation Fastlink was conducted by the FBI, including the New Haven Field Office in coordination with the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Connecticut and the Criminal Division’s Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section (CCIPS). This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward Chang and Senior Counsel Clement McGovern of CCIPS.

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