



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2009
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COLUMBUS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Investigation uncovers approximately 3,000 images on his computer

COLUMBUS – Charles Fairbanks, 50, of Columbus, pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of distribution of child pornography after investigators found approximately 3,000 images on his computer of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Keith L. Bennett, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation Cincinnati Field Division (FBI) announced the plea entered today before United States District Judge George C. Smith.

According to a statement of facts presented during the plea hearing, Fairbanks entered an online chat room in September, 2007 and began chatting with “Curious Mom”, an FBI agent posing as the mother of a 14-year old girl. Fairbanks wrote that he had “tons” of young pictures and proceeded to send via the internet connection, 32 digital images including thirteen images of child pornography.

On the basis of this information, the FBI and a member of the Cyber Crimes Task Force interviewed Fairbanks at his home. During this interview, Fairbanks admitted that he collected child pornography, and that he chatted online with individuals interested in child pornography several times a month. Fairbanks also admitted that he sent a user child pornography images about every other month.

“Under the terms of the plea agreement, Fairbanks faces at least five and up to 20 years imprisonment for distribution of child pornography,” Lockhart said. “Law enforcement officers patrolling the Internet are as crucial to our public safety as having officers patrolling our streets.”

Lockhart commended the FBI agents who investigated the case, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Hunter, who is prosecuting the case.

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