



Department of Justice

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OREGON MAN CONVICTED FOR HELPING THOUSANDS STEAL INTERNET SERVICE

WASHINGTON – A Redmond, Ore., man was convicted yesterday of seven counts of wire fraud by a federal jury in Boston, Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Carmen Ortiz of the District of Massachusetts announced today.

Ryan Harris, 26, was the owner of TCNISO, a company that distributed products enabling users to steal Internet service. From 2003 through 2009, Harris developed and distributed hardware and software tools that allowed his customers to modify their cable modems so that they could disguise themselves as paying subscribers and obtain Internet service without paying. The products included a “packet sniffer,” which Harris dubbed “Coax Thief.” “Coax Thief” surreptitiously intercepted (or “sniffed”) Internet traffic so that the user obtained the media access control addresses and configuration files of surrounding modems. TCNISO and Harris also offered ongoing customer support, primarily through forums that it hosted on the TCNISO website, to assist customers in their cable modem hacking activities.

“Mr. Harris tried to hide behind the banner of freedom of access to the Internet, but the evidence established that he built a million dollar business helping customers steal Internet service,” said Assistant Attorney General Breuer.

U.S. Attorney Carmen M. Ortiz said, “The Internet is an incredible resource that has transformed the way we conduct business. Unfortunately, it has also become a breeding ground for criminals. We will continue to prioritize the prosecution of those who wish to utilize our communication systems to conduct illegal activity and inflict harm on others.”

Each count carries a maximum prison term of 20 years and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentencing has been scheduled for May 23, 2012, at 3 p.m. before Chief District Court Judge Mark Wolf, who presided over the trial.

The case was investigated by the Boston Field Office of the FBI and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam Bookbinder of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Massachusetts’s Cybercrimes Unit and Trial Attorney Mona Sedky from the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section in the Justice Department’s Criminal Division.

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