



Department of Justice

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VIRGINIA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

WASHINGTON – A Bedford, Va., man pleaded guilty today to 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, 41, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia to one count of receipt of child pornography, one count of transportation of child pornography and one count of possession of child pornography. Carter was originally indicted in January 2010 on child pornography charges.

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.

Sentencing has been set for Oct. 20, 2010. At sentencing, Carter faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison for each count of transporting and receiving child pornography and a maximum of 10 years in prison for possessing child pornography. He also faces forfeiture of all seized property, a maximum fine of \$250,000 and the possibility of lifetime supervised release.

This case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Anitha S. Ibrahim of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section 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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