



Department of Justice

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District of Massachusetts

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ALLEGED HACKER CHARGED WITH STEALING OVER FOUR MILLION DOCUMENTS FROM MIT NETWORK

BOSTON, Mass. - A federal indictment unsealed today, charges a Cambridge man with computer intrusion, fraud, and data theft in computer hacking incidents that targeted the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and JSTOR, a not-for-profit archive of scientific journals and academic work.

AARON SWARTZ, 24, was charged in an indictment with wire fraud, computer fraud, unlawfully obtaining information from a protected computer, and recklessly damaging a protected computer. If convicted on these charges, **SWARTZ** faces up to 35 years in prison, to be followed by three years of supervised release, restitution, forfeiture and a fine of up to \$1 million.

The indictment alleges that between September 24, 2010, and January 6, 2011, **Swartz** contrived to break into a restricted computer wiring closet in a basement at MIT and to access MIT's network without authorization from a computer switch within that closet. He is charged with doing this in order to download a major portion of JSTOR's archive of digitized academic journal articles onto his computers and hard drives. JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization that has invested heavily in providing an online system for archiving, accessing, and searching digitized copies of over 1,000 academic journals. It is alleged that **Swartz** avoided MIT's and JSTOR's security efforts in order to distribute a significant proportion of JSTOR's archive through one or more file-sharing sites.

The indictment alleges that **Swartz's** repeated automatic downloads impaired JSTOR's computers, brought down some of its servers, and deprived various computers at MIT from accessing JSTOR's research. Even after JSTOR and MIT worked to block **Swartz's** computers, **Swartz** allegedly returned with new methods for accessing JSTOR and downloading articles.

The indictment alleges that **Swartz** exploited MIT's computer system to steal over four million articles from JSTOR, even though **Swartz** was not affiliated with MIT as a student, faculty member, or employee. In fact, during these events, **Swartz** was allegedly a fellow at a Boston-area university, through which he could have accessed JSTOR's services and archive for legitimate research.

United States Attorney Carmen M. Ortiz said, “Stealing is stealing whether you use a computer command or a crowbar, and whether you take documents, data or dollars. It is equally harmful to the victim whether you sell what you have stolen or give it away.”

“The New England Electronic Crimes Task Force has taken an aggressive stance in the investigation of computer intrusions and other cybercrimes,” said Steven D. Ricciardi, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Secret Service in New England. “Through this task force, the Secret Service and our partners on the Cambridge and MIT Police Departments demonstrate the importance of cooperation among law enforcement to focus resources and respond effectively to investigate and prevent this type of fraud.”

Commissioner Robert C. Haas of the Cambridge Police Department said, “The Cambridge Police Department was pleased to aid our partners at the U.S. Secret Service and MIT Police Department with this investigation. The results of the investigation reflect the importance of the inter-agency collaboration that was necessary to bring about the charges in the indictment.”

At this time, the government is unaware of any personal identifying information being stolen from JSTOR as a result of **SWARTZ**'s alleged actions.

U.S. Attorney Ortiz, Special Agent in Charge Ricciardi and Commissioner Robert C. Haas of the Cambridge Police Department made the announcement today. The case was investigated by the United States Secret Service's Electronic Crimes Task Force and the Cambridge and MIT Police Departments. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Stephen P. Heymann and Scott L. Garland of Ortiz's Cybercrime Unit.

The details contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendant is presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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