

Hacker Ring Pleads Guilty

As the daily frequency of communication through computer networks increases, criminal use of computer technology is becoming common. Evidence of this prevalence of computers as tools in crime is apparent in the case of the Phonemasters, an international ring of hackers who were able to gain access to major telephone networks, portions of the national power grid, air traffic control systems, and numerous databases. This hacker ring provided calling card numbers, credit reports, criminal records, and other data to individuals in Canada, the United States, Switzerland, and Italy who willing to pay for the information. The investigation of this case required the capture of Phonemasters' data communications under a Title III order and was successfully accomplished by collecting and analyzing the analog modem signals from the target phone lines. Phonemasters suspects Calvin Cantrell and Cory Lindsay were convicted in September, 1999, for theft and possession of unauthorized access devices and unauthorized access to a federal interest computer. Cantrell was sentenced to two years in prison while Lindsay received a sentence of 41 months.

To support future cases of this nature, the FBI Laboratory is working to develop network intercept techniques and to produce software tools that view and analyze captured data. The intercept of data communications is becoming more common, and some of the intercepts are achieved by capturing modem signals, as in this case. However, many intercepts are now capturing the target's data transmissions at the target's Internet service provider, where analog modem signals are converted to digital signals. Intercepting data at this point is usually more reliable and cost effective.

More Info:

Statement of the record on **Issue of Intrusions into Government Computer Networks**

<http://www.fbi.gov/congress/congress01/rondick.htm>

Statement of the record on **Cybercrime**

<http://www.fbi.gov/congress/congress00/cyber021600.htm>