

Hacker Gets Suspended Sentence, Fine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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ST. PETERSBURG — A hacker was handed a six-year suspended sentence Wednesday after he pleaded guilty to participating in a worldwide scheme to withdraw \$9 million from automated teller machines.

Viktor Pleshchuk, 28, received a reduced sentence, which includes four years of probation, prosecutors said. He agreed to provide information about other hackers who cracked a computer system at RBS WorldPay, the U.S. payment-processing division of Royal Bank of Scotland Group, and cloning ATM cards, said his lawyer, Yury Novolodsky. Pleshchuk was also ordered to pay more than 275 million rubles (\$8.9 million) to WorldPay.

"This is not a regular crime but a cybercrime, and Pleshchuk didn't really have a full understanding of the damage he was causing," Novolodsky said in an interview. "He pleaded guilty and is fully collaborating with authorities."

The U.S. Justice Department last year indicted Pleshchuk and seven other hackers in Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, saying the group used "sophisticated hacking techniques"

in November 2008 to compromise the data encryption that was used by RBS WorldPay to protect customer data on payroll debit cards, according to a statement on its web site.

The cards were used to withdraw the money from 2,100 ATMs in 280 cities worldwide in less than 12 hours, in what U.S. prosecutors called "perhaps the most sophisticated and organized computer-fraud attack ever conducted," the statement said.

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