

Second Russian Man Pleads Guilty of Largest Ever U.S. Cyber Heist

September 17, 2015



A second Russian citizen has pleaded guilty to U.S. charges that he participated in a computer hacking scheme that compromised more than 160 million credit card numbers and caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damages.

Dmitry Smilianets, 32, pleaded guilty on Wednesday in a federal court in Camden, New Jersey, to conspiring to commit wire fraud, three years after his arrest in what authorities say was the largest computer hacking scheme ever prosecuted in the United States.

Smilianets, a Moscow resident, made his plea a day after another Russian, Vladimir Drinkman, 34, pleaded guilty in the case to conspiring to illegally access computers and conspiring to commit wire fraud.

Both men were arrested while traveling in the Netherlands on June 28. Three others charged remain at large, authorities said.

Prosecutors said that as far back as 2003, the men worked to install "sniffers" designed to comb through and steal data from computer networks of financial companies, payment

processors and retailers.

Prosecutors said the defendants then used an array of computers to store and ultimately sell data they collected.

They said Smilianets was in charge of sales, selling data to trusted identity theft wholesalers, selling credit card numbers for \$10 to \$50 a piece depending on country of origin.

The scheme ultimately caused banks and credit card companies to suffer hundreds of millions in losses, including more than \$300 million reported by three companies alone, prosecutors said.

Sixteen companies' networks were infiltrated, including those of Nasdaq OMX Group Inc, 7-Eleven, France's Carrefour SA, JC Penney Co, JetBlue Airways Corp, a Visa Inc licensee, and Heartland Payment Systems Inc, prosecutors said.

Smilianets faces up to 30 years in prison when he is sentenced by U.S. District Judge Jerome Simandle on Jan. 13. His lawyer did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Still at large are Alexander Kalinin, 28, of St. Petersburg, Russia; Roman Kotov, 34, of Moscow; and Mikhail Rytikov, 28, of Odessa, Ukraine.

Drinkman and Kalinin were previously been charged as "Hacker 1" and "Hacker 2" in a 2009 indictment accusing Albert Gonzalez of Miami over his involvement in five corporate data breaches. Gonzalez is serving a 20-year federal prison term.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/09/17/second-russian-man-pleads-guilty-of-largest-ever-us-cyber-heist-a49621>