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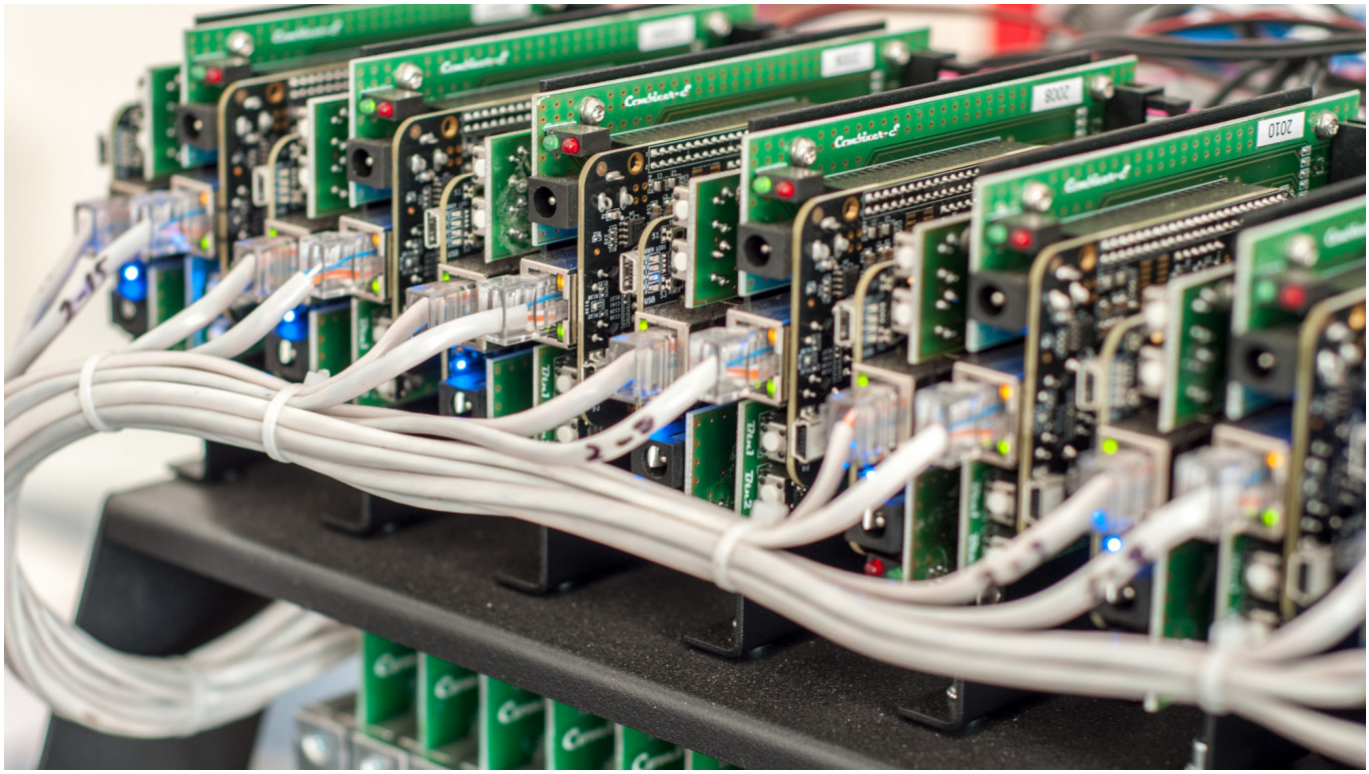
Russian Nuclear Scientist Jailed for Mining Bitcoins at Secret Lab

October 25, 2019



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An engineer accused of using one of Russia's most powerful supercomputers at a secret nuclear laboratory to mine Bitcoins has been sentenced to three years and three months in prison.

Andrei Rybkin is one of three scientists to be convicted of using a workplace supercomputer to mine the cryptocurrency in the closed city of Sarov. The Sarov institute, where the first Soviet nuclear weapon was made in 1949, is home to some of Russia's most powerful supercomputers.

Related article: Russian Nuclear Engineer Fined for Mining Bitcoin at Top-Secret Lab

"Rybkin was sentenced to three years and three months in a penal colony for the totality of crimes," Interfax quoted a court spokesperson as saying Thursday.

The Sarov city court in Nizhny Novgorod region published Rybkin's conviction of illegally accessing computer information, violating computer operation rules and spreading a harmful computer virus.

The court handed a second defendant, Andrei Shatokhin, a suspended sentence of four years last week, according to Interfax. Last month, it fined a third Sarov lab employee $7,000 in the supercomputer mining case.

The group caused the nuclear research center $17,700 in damage for mostly nighttime activities on unused computers in May-September 2017, Interfax cited court materials as saying.

Energy costs are notoriously high for mining Bitcoin, a cryptocurrency built on blockchain technology.

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