Some Hackers Making Identity Theft Look Like Small Potatoes

August 18, 2015 â€“ Nine hackers have been indicted in a rather unusual but very profitable hacking scheme that wasnâ€™t setup to commit identity theft. The suspects are accused of hacking into various news wire services and stealing press releases ahead of their scheduled publication dates. The information they obtained was then used to make stock trades on the NYSE and NASDAQ stock exchanges.

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The US Attorneyâ€™s office for the District of New Jersey released a statement saying that the scheme resulted in the theft of more than 150,000 press releases and generated nearly $30 million in trading profits. Separate published reports say that profits may have exceeded $100 million.

Of the press releases stolen, only 800 of them were used to make illegal stock trades.

â€œThe defendants were a well-organized group that allegedly robbed the newswire companies and their clients and cheated the securities markets and the investing public by engaging in an unprecedented hacking and trading scheme,â€• U.S. Attorney Fishman said. â€œThe defendants launched a series of sophisticated and relentless cyber-attacks against three major newswire companies, stole highly confidential information and used to enrich themselves at the expense of public companies and their shareholders.â€•

Six of the hackers were arrested in the United States. Three others remain at large in the Ukraine. International arrest warrants have been issued for them.

The scheme operated from February of 2010 until earlier this month. If convicted, each of the defendants faces huge fines and well over 20 years in federal prison.
byJim Malmberg
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