

'Chernobyl' virus author dodges prison

May 3 2006

A Russian college student convicted of creating the Chernobyl computer virus received a two-year suspended sentence Tuesday.

Sergei Kazachkov was found guilty of distributing computer viruses over a pair of Web sites where more than 4,000 malicious programs were available for copying, the Itar-Tass news service said Wednesday, citing security forces in the city of Voronezh.

The most notorious of the viruses posted by Kazachkov was Chernobyl, which was launched in 1999 and was blamed for damage to thousands of computers worldwide. The Portable Executable infector targeted Windows 95 and 98 and was capable of overwriting sectors of hard drives with random characters, causing the computer to treat the drive as if it was empty.

The virus was programmed to deploy on April 26, the anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster.

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