

Guilty plea in Seattle 'botnet' case

May 5 2006

A California man pleaded guilty Thursday to charges stemming from a "botnet" attack last year that damaged U.S. Department of Defense computers.

Christopher Maxwell, 20, of Vacaville, faces up to 15 years in prison when he is sentenced by a federal judge in Seattle on Aug. 4.

Maxwell pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit computer fraud and to damage a protected computer, and intentionally damaging a protected computer by taking part in a botnet rampage triggered in December 2005.

The U.S. Attorney's office said the incident caused \$135,000 in damage to military computers in the United States and abroad. In addition, the system at Seattle's Northwest Hospital malfunctioned.

A botnet is created when a hacker launches a program on the Web that hijacks scores of computers and uses them to send out a torrent of unwanted adware.

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