

French hacker tells court he meant well

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Frenchman Francois Cousteix, 23, leaves the court after attending his trial in Clermont-Ferrand, central France. The young Frenchman accused of hacking into US President Barack Obama's Twitter account insisted at his trial on Thursday that he had done so for the common good.

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Francois Cousteix, 23, who surfed the web at his home in the central region of Auvergne under the moniker Hacker-Croll, faces a two-year jail term for illegally accessing the account on the micro-blogging service.

"I did it for preventive reasons, not to hurt people," Cousteix told the court on Thursday.

He told the court "it was to raise web users' awareness" of the need to choose secure passwords, and aimed to show that "the weak link is not the machine but the person."

Cousteix was caught in March after [FBI](#) investigators in the [United States](#) alerted French authorities.

They found he had deduced the passwords of [Twitter](#) administrators from personal information that was posted publicly, enabling him to access accounts in the names of Obama and numerous other famous people.

Asked by the presiding judge if he considered himself a [hacker](#), Cousteix replied: "Not in the strict sense of the term. I didn't destroy anything. I could have, but I didn't. It's against my ethics."

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