

Man pleads not guilty to running vast spam network

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(AP) -- A Russian man accused of masterminding a vast worldwide spamming network has pleaded not guilty in a Wisconsin federal court.

Oleg (OH'-leg) Nikolaenko (NIK'-oh-lye-ehn-koh) was arraigned Friday morning in Milwaukee. The 23-year-old Moscow man was slightly disheveled in his orange prison jumpsuit. His attorney entered the plea while a Russian interpreter translated for Nikolaenko.

Prosecutors say Nikolaenko ran a network that involved placing malicious code on unsuspecting users' computers and then hijacking the infected machines to blast out billions of e-mails.

Internet-security experts say the network was so massive that on some days it accounted for one of every three unwanted e-mails in the world.

Nikolaenko is charged with violating a U.S. anti-spam act. The charge carries a maximum penalty of three years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

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