

British police charge 19-year-old in hacking probe

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British police have charged 19-year-old Ryan Cleary with cybercrime offences, Scotland Yard said, following his arrest in connection with an international hacking group.

British police charged a 19-year-old man with cybercrime offences on Wednesday, Scotland Yard said, following his arrest in connection with an international hacking group.

Ryan Cleary will appear in court in central London on Thursday to face five charges including that he hacked the website of Britain's Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), it said in a statement.

The young man "has this afternoon been charged with offences under the Criminal Law Act and Computer Misuse Act by officers from the Metropolitan Police Service's Police Central e-Crime Unit," it said.

Police have previously said Cleary was arrested on Monday in a raid on his home in Wickford, southeast England, for alleged links to the Lulz Security group, following cooperation with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Lulz has claimed responsibility for a month-long rampage against international businesses and government agencies, including SOCA, the CIA and Senate in the United States and electronics giant Sony.

Scotland Yard said Cleary was charged with targeting the SOCA website on Monday with a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack. DDoS attacks overwhelm websites with requests, causing them to be slow or inaccessible.

He was charged with similar attacks on the website of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) in November and the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) on October, it said.

Cleary faces two further charges of creating a "botnet" or network of computers to carry out DDoS attacks.

British media reports quoted his mother Rita as saying that Cleary had agoraphobia and attention deficit disorder. She said he was an introverted young man who "lives his life online."

Lulz issued Twitter postings overnight denying that Cleary was part of the group.

"Ryan Cleary is not part of LulzSec; we house one of our many legitimate chatrooms on his IRC (Internet Relay Chat) server, but that's it," it said.

"Clearly the UK police are so desperate to catch us that they've gone and

arrested someone who is, at best, mildly associated with us. Lame."

The group said meanwhile that it had carried out new attacks that had taken down the websites of the government and presidency of Brazil. They were offline for several hours on Wednesday.

"TANGO DOWN www.brasil.gov.br and www.presidencia.gov.br," said one posting, followed by another saying: "Our Brazilian unit is making progress. Well done @LulzSecBrazil, brothers!".

In an online manifesto posted last week, Lulz -- whose name is a derivative of the text shorthand for LOL, or "laugh out loud" -- said they were staging the attacks for their own entertainment.

"You find it funny to watch havoc unfold, and we find it funny to cause it," it said.

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