

China and US smash child porn sites

August 26 2011



A police officer works on a computer to combat cyber crime. China and the United States have closed down a network of Chinese child pornography sites, in a rare instance of cooperation between the two nations on cyber crime, Beijing said.

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The network comprised at least 48 pornographic sites, 18 of which contained graphic images of children, China's public security ministry said in a statement released Thursday.

The ministry said the operation to close down the sites, which were aimed at a Chinese audience, was "the first successful joint law enforcement campaign by the two nations on online crimes".

"We will continue to strengthen joint judicial cooperation with other nations to tackle international cyber crimes such as online pornography, fraud, gambling and hacking," it added.

Chinese police arrested several people suspected of money-laundering and maintaining the sites in China, the ministry said.

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) said earlier this week that Chinese-born Wang Yong, a permanent US resident, had been charged over the sites and faced a minimum sentence of 15 years if found guilty.

"The charges against Mr. Wang stem from a nine-month undercover FBI operation dedicated to protecting the most innocent members of our society: children," FBI official Janice Fedarcky said in the statement.

China maintains strict censorship of the Internet to curb what the government deems to be unhealthy content, including pornography and violence -- an effort that has become known as the "Great Firewall of China."

China has the world's largest online population, at 485 million people.

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Citation: China and US smash child porn sites (2011, August 26) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-08-china-child-porn-sites.html>

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