

Serious Facebook hack lands UK student in prison

February 17 2012, By RAPHAEL SATTER , Associated Press



A Facebook sign is seen at the main entrance of Facebook's new headquarters in California on February 1. A student who infiltrated Facebook in what prosecutors called "the most extensive and flagrant" case of social media hacking ever heard in a British court was jailed for eight months.

(AP) -- A British student who stole sensitive information from Facebook's internal network was sentenced to eight months in prison Friday in what prosecutors described as the most serious case of social media hacking ever brought before the country's courts.

Prosecutor Sandip Patel said that Glenn Mangham, 26, had hacked into the [social networking](#) giant's computers from his bedroom in the [northern England](#) city of York and stole what was described as "invaluable" intellectual property.

"He acted with determination, undoubted ingenuity and it was sophisticated, it was calculating," Patel told London's Southwark Crown Court ahead of sentencing Friday. He added later: "This represents the most extensive and grave incident of social media hacking to be brought before the British courts."

London Chief Prosecutor Alison Saunders echoed Patel's description, saying in a statement that Mangham's actions were "extensive and flagrant." It was not immediately clear exactly what he stole, although Saunders said that no personal user data had been compromised.

[Scotland Yard](#) said in a statement that the breach had occurred "over a short period of time" in April of last year. The court was told that Mangham had obtained the information after hacking into the account of a Facebook employee while the staff member was on vacation.

The police statement said that Facebook Inc. discovered the breach in May and alerted the FBI, who traced the source of the attack back to Britain. Scotland Yard's e-crimes unit raided Mangham's home on June 2.

The software development student pleaded guilty on Dec. 13. His lawyer, Tony Ventham, described Mangham as an "ethical [hacker](#)" who saw the stunt as a challenge - and stressed that his client had never tried to sell the stolen data or pass it on to anyone else.

"This is someone who in previous times would have thrown everything aside to seek the source of the Nile," Ventham said. "He was in his own world, his own bedroom, his own mind, his own project and certainly his intention throughout was to contact Facebook in due course when he had rectified their problems."

But while Judge Alistair McCreath accepted that Mangham had not tried

to profit from his crime, he said that the defendant's actions still had "very serious potential consequences" which could have been "utterly disastrous" for Facebook.

"This was not just a bit of harmless experimentation," McCreath told Mangham. "You accessed the very heart of the system of an international business of massive size, so this was not just fiddling about in the business records of some tiny business of no great importance."

The Palo Alto, California-based Facebook said in a statement that it applauded police and prosecutors' efforts in the case, adding: "We take any attempt to gain unauthorized access to our network very seriously."

The company, which boasts some 845 million users worldwide, recently filed papers for its initial public offering at the beginning of this month, putting it on track to price its stock in May or June.

[Facebook](#) is expected to be valued at \$75 billion to \$100 billion.

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Citation: Serious Facebook hack lands UK student in prison (2012, February 17) retrieved 8 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-02-facebook-hack-uk-student-prison.html>

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