

Indictment returned in NYC computer hacking case

May 3 2012, By LARRY NEUMEISTER , Associated Press

(AP) -- The name of a Chicago man already charged in a computer hacking case aimed at taking out key players in the worldwide group Anonymous was added to an indictment Wednesday, boosting the accusations against him by including him in much of the wider conspiracy to hack into corporations and government agencies worldwide.

Jeremy Hammond, 27, joined four other defendants named in the indictment in federal court in Manhattan in a prosecution revealed in March. Hammond is being held at a lower Manhattan lockup after initially appearing in a Chicago court.

Authorities said the prosecution marks the first time core members of the loosely organized worldwide [hacking group](#) Anonymous have been identified and charged in the U.S.

Prosecutors said the defendants and others hacked into companies and government agencies worldwide, including the U.S. Senate. They say they also stole confidential information, defaced websites and temporarily put some victims out of business. Authorities say their crimes affected more than 1 million people.

A message left with Hammond's lawyer for comment was not immediately returned. It was not clear when Hammond would appear at an arraignment to enter a plea to the indictment.

Hammond is the only defendant in Manhattan, except for Hector Xavier Monsegur, a 28-year-old self-taught, unemployed computer programmer who was living on welfare in public housing in New York when he joined other elite hackers in various schemes.

A legendary hacker known as Sabu, Monsegur pleaded guilty and cooperated for most of the last year with the FBI, which built the case against Hammond and four others, who were arrested in Scotland, England and Ireland. None of the others have come to the U.S. to face the charges. Extraditions were being sought.

Hammond is charged in the indictment with conspiracy to commit [computer hacking](#), computer hacking, conspiracy to commit access device fraud and aggravated identity theft.

The indictment adds allegations that the conspiracy included a hack of the Arizona Department of Public Safety, a state law enforcement agency in Arizona.

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