

US-EU fraud crackdown seizes 328 websites

June 26 2013



A total of 328 website domains accused of selling counterfeit goods were seized by US and European authorities in the latest crackdown on online fraud, officials said Wednesday.

A total of 328 website domains accused of selling counterfeit goods were seized by US and European authorities in the latest crackdown on online fraud, officials said Wednesday.

US authorities seized 177 [domain names](#) for websites selling counterfeit trademark merchandise manufactured by American-owned Rosetta

Stone, NFL, Beats by Dre, Tiffany & Co and others, according to a statement.

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations said court orders for the seizures were issued after the affected companies confirmed the products were counterfeit or otherwise illegal.

Another 151 sites were shut down by the European Police (Europol) in coordination with authorities in Belgium, France, Romania and Britain.

"It is important to stop the sale of counterfeit products over the Internet as it undermines legitimate businesses and also often causes health and safety risks to consumers," said Rob Wainwright, director of Europol, in the statement from Washington.

"This successful transatlantic operation sends an important message to the criminals showing them that they cannot hide despite the fact that they are operating via the Internet.

Officials said they also seized more than \$150,000 in proceeds from PayPal accounts linked to illegal sales.

US officials have been using this procedure for several years in anti-counterfeiting operations, but rights groups including the American Civil Liberties Union have complained that the actions amount to unconstitutional seizures without due process.

But David Hirschmann of the US Chamber of Commerce's Global Intellectual Property Center hailed the actions.

"The criminals behind these websites hack away at American jobs and push dangerous products, such as medications and children's toys, into

our homes and neighborhoods," he said.

"This initiative is an important step in disrupting criminal networks that abuse the Internet and defraud the public."

The latest seizure brought the number of websites seized since 2010 to 2,252, including 1,624 forfeited to the US government, according to ICE.

© 2013 AFP

Citation: US-EU fraud crackdown seizes 328 websites (2013, June 26) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-06-us-eu-fraud-crackdown-seizes-websites.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.