

Operation Zombie arrests teen hacker in Argentina

September 13 2013, by Almudena Calatrava

(AP)—Argentine police say they have arrested an alleged 19-year-old hacker on suspicion of leading a network specialized in fraud and complex financial transactions that led to security breaches at numerous websites.

The youth, whose identity has not been revealed, is the son of an information systems engineer. He was initially detained at his home in Buenos Aires in July as part of "Operation Zombie," which included five raids in the capital and the city of Rosario, about 190 miles (300 kilometers) north, the Security Ministry reported Friday.

Experts believe the "super-hacker" diverted about \$50,000 a month to his bank account, using the "technological cave" he assembled at his home. Police raiding his Buenos Aires residence seized sophisticated computers and other technological equipment.

Officials identified six more people who were involved in the criminal network.

The police department's Operation Zombie began in 2012, when a businessman who offered hosting services for personal web pages on his servers said that a hacker was remotely entering the servers to intercept monetary transfers.

Former criminal attorney Graciela Gils Carbo, who is now Argentina's chief prosecutor, ordered the federal police to begin an investigation that

uncovered that the same person was stealing from money transfer and online game sites.

"Internet users were victims of a 'malware' virus that the hacker hosted in a server for downloading online gaming applications," said a ministry statement.

To complete the job and avoid alerting victims to an illegal money transfer, the suspected hacker carried out a "denial of service" maneuver that used a network of thousands of "zombie" computers to saturate the platform for payments so users could not access their accounts around the time of the attack.

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