Russian accused of hacking US retailers held for trial (Update)

July 7 2014

A Russian national accused of hacking into US retail computer systems was arrested and ordered to face criminal charges, officials said Monday

A Russian national accused of hacking into US retail computer systems was arrested and ordered to face criminal charges, officials said Monday.

The Justice Department said an indictment was unsealed following the

arrest of Roman Valerevich Seleznev, 30, of Moscow, who uses the moniker "Track2" in the hacker underground.

Officials said Seleznev was formally charged in March 2011 but the charges were only made public after his arrest on Saturday.

The statement provided few details but said Seleznev "was arrested this weekend and transported to Guam for an initial appearance" in court on charges of distribution of stolen credit card information.

When asked by AFP, a Justice Department spokesman declined to elaborate on the circumstances of Seleznev's arrest.

At his court appearance in Guam, Seleznev was ordered detained pending a further hearing scheduled for July 22.

Seleznev is charged with hacking into retail computer systems and installing malicious software to steal credit card numbers in a scheme that operated between October 2009 and February 2011.

He is accused of creating and operating an underground network to facilitate the theft and sales of credit card data.

The charges in the indictment include five counts of bank fraud, eight counts of intentionally causing damage to a protected computer and related offenses including identity theft.

"Cyber crooks should take heed: you cannot hide behind distant keyboards," said US Attorney Jenny Durkan of the northwest state of Washington, where Seleznev will be tried.

If convicted, the Russian could face up to 30 years in prison on bank fraud charges and additional jail time for the other charges, as well as

hefty fines. He faces a separate criminal indictment in Nevada on racketeering charges.

In the 2011 indictment, the scheme involved inserting malicious software into the "point of sale" computer systems at Seattle-area restaurants and hundreds of other small retailers across the United States.

Seleznev and his partners stole over 200,000 credit card numbers and sold more than 140,000 in underground forums—many at $20 to $30 each.

The bank losses from the scheme were over $1.1 million, the indictment said.

© 2014 AFP