

Key scientist says politics behind stolen e-mails

24 November 2009, By P. SOLOMON BANDA , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- A leading climate change scientist said hackers breaking into a university's computer server and then posting documents online show the nasty politics of global warming.

Kevin Trenberth, head of the climate analysis section of the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, said the hackers' intentions may have been to influence discussions in an upcoming global [climate change](#) summit in Denmark.

"It comes down to politics at sort of all levels, and some of it's nasty and some of it is trying to destroy the message or even kill the messenger so to speak," Trenberth said Monday in an interview with The Associated Press.

The University of East Anglia, in eastern England, said hackers last week stole about a decade's worth of data from a [computer server](#) at the university's Climatic Research Unit, a leading global research center on climate change.

About 1,000 e-mails and 3,000 documents have been posted on Web sites and seized on by climate change skeptics, who claim correspondence shows collusion between scientists to overstate the case for global warming, and evidence that some have manipulated evidence.

"The messengers in this case are the scientists who are putting forward a basis for this, the basis for the climate change based on, and founded upon the facts, the measurements and the observations and our best interpretation of those," Trenberth said.

Trenberth said he's identified 102 e-mails stolen from a British university's computer server. Hackers distributed only documents that could help attempts by skeptics to undermine the scientific consensus on man-made climate change.

Many of the exchanges were between him and Phil Jones, the British research center's director. The two men worked on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change assessments, which articulated the scientific community's consensus on [global warming](#) in 2001 and 2007.

"What you see in those e-mails are exchanges among a whole bunch of scientists on issues," Trenberth said. "What you will find is that there is a tremendous amount of integrity, vigorous discussion about issues and exactly how to handle issues... So it's far from a whole bunch of scientists agreeing and colluding to do things. They're actually arguing, vigorously, about the science."

Trenberth, a well-respected atmospheric scientist, said it did not appear that all the documents stolen from the university had been distributed on the Internet by the hackers.

At least 65 world leaders will attend the Copenhagen climate summit in December as representatives of 191 nations seek agreement on a new global treaty on limiting emissions of greenhouse gases.

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