

British court hears cases of two suspected teenage hackers

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Ryan Cleary, a teenager charged with attacking websites as part of the international hacking group Lulz Security (LulzSec), is seen leaving a London court last month. A court has heard the case of Cleary and another teenager accused of being key players in LulzSec. The brief procedural hearing was the first time the cases of Cleary and Jake Davis, 18, had been grouped together.

A British court on Tuesday heard the cases of two teenagers accused of being key players in the LulzSec computer hacking group, which has claimed responsibility for a wave of high-profile cyber-attacks.

The brief procedural hearing was the first time that the cases of Jake Davis, 18, and Ryan Cleary, 19, had been grouped together, although neither of the accused appeared at Southwark Crown Court in London.

Judge Nicholas Loraine-Smith ordered them to appear in court for a procedural hearing on January 27.

Davis was arrested in July at his home on the Shetland Islands, a remote archipelago off the northeast Scottish mainland, on suspicion of being a spokesman for the LulzSec and Anonymous hacking groups.

Police said he used the online nickname "Topiary" which is presented as the spokesman for the groups.

He faces several charges, including one of conspiring to carry out a distributed denial of service attack, an action which crashes a website by flooding it with traffic.

Davis is free on bail on condition that he wears an electronic tag, observes a curfew and does not access the Internet.

Cleary was arrested in June at his home in Wickford, southeast England, charged with attacking websites as part of LulzSec, including the site of the Serious Organised Crime Agency, the British equivalent of the FBI.

A judge granted him bail on strict conditions after his defence team said he had been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism.

At Tuesday's hearing, judge Loraine-Smith said: "Bail has to be on the same stringent terms for both of these defendants."

The British inquiry is being led by a London-based specialist cybercrime unit.

Lulz Security has claimed responsibility for a hacking rampage in the United States which saw the group target websites of the Central Intelligence Agency, the US Senate, Sony and others.

Anonymous gained prominence after launching retaliatory attacks on companies perceived to be enemies of the whistle-blowing website

WikiLeaks.

Police on Tuesday charged a 17-year-old from Chester, northwest England, over online attacks by the hacking gang.

The teenager is accused of conspiracy to do an unauthorised act in relation to a computer, Scotland Yard said, and was bailed to appear at London's City of Westminster Magistrates' Court on September 7.

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