

Chinese national sentenced to prison for stealing software code

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A Chinese national was sentenced to five years in prison on economic espionage charges in connection with the theft of proprietary software code from a US technology company, officials said Friday.

A Justice Department statement announced the sentencing Thursday of 32-year-old Xu Jiaqiang, a software developer. The statement did not identify the company but Xu had earlier been identified as a former IBM employee in China.

"As he previously admitted in federal court, Xu Jiaqiang stole high-tech trade secrets from a US employer, intending to benefit the Chinese government," said US Attorney Geoffrey Berman in New York, where the case was heard.

Xu pleaded guilty in 2016 to charges related to the theft. Officials said his scheme was intended to benefit China's National Health and Family Planning Commission and that he also offered to sell the software code to undercover federal agents.

According to court documents, Xu admitted he built a copy of the proprietary software code—the essential kernel of software programs often held tightly by their owners—and took it with him when he left the company in 2014.

He met two undercover agents in a hotel in White Plains, New York, in 2015, offering the [software](#) which was modified in an effort to conceal

its origins.

At the time, Xu told the agents he had also provided the same [code](#) to "multiple specific customers," according to the Justice Department statement.

"Xu not only stole high tech [trade secrets](#) from his US employer—a federal crime—he did so both for his own profit and intending to benefit the Chinese government," Assistant Attorney General Dana Boente said in the statement.

Xu's LinkedIn profile showed he earned a degree in computer science from the University of Delaware and worked for IBM from 2010 to 2014 in Beijing.

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