



Department of Justice

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Western District of North Carolina

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**DEFENDANT SENTENCED TO 12 MONTHS IN PRISON
AS PART OF INTERNET PIRACY CRACKDOWN**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Justin Paul Emch, 27, of Kenmore, Wash., was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Frank D. Whitney for his involvement in an Internet software piracy ring, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Gretchen C. F. Shappert of the Western District of North Carolina announced.

Emch was sentenced to 12 months in prison on one felony count of conspiracy to infringe copyright. Judge Whitney also ordered Emch to pay a \$5,000 fine and serve two years of supervised release.

In June 2006, Emch was indicted in the Western District of North Carolina as part of *Operation FastLink*, the largest and most successful federal crackdown against international Internet piracy to date. *FastLink* resulted in more than 120 search warrants and arrests in 12 countries; the confiscation of hundreds of computers and illegal online distribution hubs; and the removal of more than \$50 million worth of illegally-copied copyrighted software, games, movies, and music from illicit distribution channels.

Emch was a leader of the release group “MaGE” in the underground software piracy criminal enterprise known as the “warez” scene. He provided illegally obtained copyrighted software to the other members of that private underground group. He also tested illegally obtained software titles to ensure proper functioning of those titles once the software title’s security was broken, or cracked by other members of the group. The private underground group maintained a computer site, permitting members to upload and download the site’s contents, which consisted of thousands of pirated works. Emch himself enjoyed access to the entire online library of copyrighted works.

Such warez distribution sites ultimately supply the for-profit criminal distribution networks that cost the copyright industry billions of dollars each year. Although pirated software titles are initially distributed only to a closed group, the titles quickly filter down to commercial distribution sites and peer-to-peer networks within hours. Illegal warez copies of

software or movies are then easily and cheaply converted to optical discs and distributed throughout the world. Spammers regularly advertise cheap software that can be downloaded from websites or shipped from overseas, usually bearing the signature mark of the warez group that released it.

To date, over 50 defendants have been convicted of felony copyright infringement offenses as a result of this Department of Justice anti-piracy initiative.

This case was investigated by Supervisory Special Agent Darren Mott of the FBI's Charlotte Division. This case was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Richard Green of the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section of the U.S. Department of Justice and Assistant U.S. Attorney Corey Ellis of the Western District of North Carolina.

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