

Brazil Nabs Internet Gang

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Brazil's federal police announced that they have already detained 50 people accused to be part of a network of Internet hackers who have stolen at least US\$ 27 million (80 million reais) from several bank accounts.

The police operation called Trojan Horse II has detained people in several Brazilian states, including Ceará, Maranhão, Pará and Tocantins.

The action started early in the morning and besides the 50 people already in custody, another 24 are being sought.

According to the federal investigators, the bank hackers had been operating for more than one year. They used to send messages to bank customers passing as the financial institution.

Once they obtained the victim's password they would use it to transfer money to other accounts.

This scam tactic is known as "phishing." The scam artists create sites that are identical to those of the real businesses.

Apparently many bank clients knowingly lent their accounts to the criminal activities.

For the trouble of getting the illegal money transferred to their accounts for a short period these accomplices received from US\$ 30 to US\$ 200.

Most of those detained are between the ages of 20 and 25. The Police presented Satiro Kiquchi, Paulo Oliveira Braga and Wellington Patrick Borges as being the leaders of the gang.

The operation counted on 160 federal agents who went from Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais to Pará state. Besides people, Brazilian authorities seized computers and vehicles.

Banco do Brasil, Caixa Econômica Federal, Bradesco, Unibanco, Itaú and HSBC were some of the financial institution that were victimized. Febraban (Brazilian Federation of Banks) helped pay for the cost of the police investigation.

Eighteen of those detained today had already been caught by the first version of the Trojan Horse operation, according to the Brazilian authorities. They had been released and went back to commit the same crime again.