

Beat: News

SSNOB Marketplace Seized And Dismantled In International Operation

Websites That Listed SSN's For Sale

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USPA NEWS - United States Attorney Roger B. Handberg, along with Special Agent in Charge Darrell Waldon for the IRS - Criminal Investigation Washington D.C. Field Office, and Special Agent in Charge David Walker for the FBI - Tampa Division, today announced the seizure of the SSNOB Marketplace, a series of websites that operated for years and were used to sell personal information, including the names, dates of birth, and Social Security numbers belonging to individuals in the United States.

The SSNOB Marketplace has listed the personal information for approximately 24 million individuals in the United States, generating more than \$19 million USD in sales revenue.

The SSNOB administrators created advertisements on darkweb criminal forums for the Marketplace's services, provided customer support functions, and regularly monitored the activities of the sites, including monitoring when purchasers deposited money into their accounts. The administrators also employed various techniques to protect their anonymity and to thwart detection of their activities, including using online monikers that were distinct from their true identities, strategically maintaining servers in various countries, and requiring buyers to use digital payment methods, such as bitcoin.

The international operation to dismantle and seize this infrastructure is the result of close cooperation with law enforcement authorities in Cyprus and Latvia. On June 7, 2022, seizure orders were executed against the domain names of the SSNOB Marketplace (ssndob.ws, ssndob.vip, ssndob.club, and blackjob.biz), effectively ceasing the website's operation.

"I applaud the extensive work and cooperation by our domestic and international law enforcement partners in bringing a halt to this global scheme," said U.S. Attorney Roger Handberg. "The theft and misuse of personal information is not only criminal but can have a catastrophic impact on individuals for years to come."

"Identity theft can have a devastating impact on a victim's long-term emotional and financial health. Taking down the SSNOB website disrupted ID theft criminals and helped millions of Americans whose personal information was compromised," said Special Agent in Charge Darrell Waldon, IRS-CI Washington, D.C. Field Office. "Special agents with IRS-CI's DC Cyber Crimes Unit will continue to work with the U.S. and international law enforcement community to end these complex scams, regardless of where the money trail leads them."

"These seizures demonstrate the FBI's strong working relationship with our international partners in disrupting malicious cyber activity," said FBI Tampa Special Agent in Charge David Walker. "Dismantling illicit marketplaces that threaten the privacy and security of the American public is a priority of the FBI."

The U.S. investigation was led by the IRS - Criminal Investigation Cyber Crimes Unit and the FBI - Tampa Division, with assistance from the IRS-Criminal Investigation's Tampa Field Office. Substantial assistance was also provided by the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, the FBI's Legal Attaché Offices responsible for Latvia and Cyprus, the Latvian Police, and the Cyprus Police.

The investigation is being overseen by Assistant United States Attorney Rachel Jones and asset forfeiture will be handled by Assistant United States Attorney Suzanne Nebesky.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

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