



Awareness in Action: Case Study

Who could become an insider threat? Anyone with authorized access to company resources who uses that access, either wittingly or unwittingly, to harm the organization. Insider threats can have far reaching consequences and impacts on organizational and national security.



Yuan Li

- Chinese National Research Chemist with New Jersey office of Global Pharmaceutical Company
- Age at arrest: 29
- Pled Guilty January 2012
- Charges: Trade Secret Theft
- Sentence: 18 Months in Prison, 2 years Supervised Release

Espionage Indicators

- Accessing Information without Need to Know
- Misuse of Information Systems



What Happened

- Between October 2008 and June 2011 Li accessed her employer's internal databases and downloaded sensitive company information to a removable device
- Li uploaded the information on her personal home computer
- The stolen information was made available for sale through Abby Pharmatech, Inc.
- Abby Pharmatech, Inc. is the U.S. subsidiary of a Chinese chemical company
- Li was a 50% Partner in Abby Pharmatech, Inc.



Impacts

- The company lost valuable research that impacted numerous projects
- Long held trade secrets were disclosed to competitors and the public
- Profits from current and future projects were compromised

Learn More

This case study examined a real-life insider threat. Your awareness is key to protecting our national security from insider threats like this one. Visit the Center for Development of Security Excellence's website (<http://www.cdse.edu>) for additional case studies, information, materials, and training, or go directly to the Insider Threat Toolkit at <http://www.cdse.edu/toolkits/insider/index.php>.