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INSIDER THREAT JOB AID

Awareness in Action: Case Study

Who could become an insider threat? Anyone with authorized access to protected information who uses that access—either wittingly or unwittingly—to harm national security. Insider threats can have far reaching consequences and impacts on national security.

Charles H. Eccleston

- Former Department of Energy and Nuclear Regulatory Commission employee arrested in January 2015
- Pled guilty to unauthorized access and intentional damage to U.S. information systems
- In April 2016, he was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison

Espionage Indicators

- Contact with Foreign Embassy
- Unauthorized use of Information Technology
- Workplace performance and conduct issues
- Co-opting former coworkers

What Happened

- Eccleston attempted to hack federal agency computers to steal and then sell nuclear secrets to Iran, China, and Venezuela.
- Fired from his job at the Nuclear Regular Commission (NRC) in 2010, Eccleston had been living in the Philippines since 2011. He came to the attention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 2013 when he entered a foreign embassy in Manilla and offered to sell a list of over 5,000 email accounts of all officials, engineers, and employees of a U.S. government energy agency.

- Thereafter, Eccleston met and corresponded with FBI undercover agents posing as representatives of the foreign country.
- In January 2015, Eccleston sent dozens of spear-phishing emails to former colleagues containing malware that could be used to extract classified nuclear information and deliver a computer virus.

Impacts

- Potential for compromise, exploitation, and damage to U.S. government computer systems that contained sensitive nuclear weapon-related information with the intent to damage systems or allow foreign nations to gain access to that information.

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 Tool Kit at http://www.cdse.edu/toolkits/insider/index.php

If you SEE something, SAY something.