

Programmer Detained After FBI Search

By **ANDREW DOWELL**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation said Wednesday it has searched the home of a member of the group of computer programmers that disclosed a security flaw in AT&T Inc.'s website last week.

digits: iPad Hacker Detained After FBI Search

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A member of the group of computer programmers who disclosed a security flaw in AT&T's website last week has been detained by police in Arkansas following a Federal Bureau of investigation search of his home. Andrew Dowell has details.

Andrew Auernheimer was being detained in an Arkansas jail on charges related to illegal drugs found during the search, said Sgt. Rex Frederick of the Washington County Sheriff's Office. Efforts to locate an attorney for Mr. Auernheimer, who is 24 years old, weren't successful.

The FBI said its search was related to its investigation into the breach of AT&T's website. The breach exposed the email addresses and device IDs of more than 100,000 iPad users, including executives and government

officials.

Journal Community

Should the computer experts that exposed AT&T's security flaw on the iPad face a criminal investigation?

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"I can confirm we did a search," FBI Special Agent Bryan Travers said. He said the FBI hasn't asked for Mr. Auernheimer to be detained; he was being held on state drug charges. News of the arrest was earlier reported by CNet News.

AT&T has apologized for the website breach and closed the hole, but blamed the incident on "malicious" hackers and said it would cooperate with any effort to prosecute them.

Mr. Auernheimer, who gave his name as Escher Auernheimer last week in media interviews, has been the public representative of Goatse Security, the group that targeted AT&T's website and says it publicized the breach to protect users.

Kyle Barnhouse, who identified himself as the current spokesman for the group, said Mr. Auernheimer wasn't involved in writing the computer code used to exploit AT&T's site.

Goatse Security is a loosely affiliated group of nine programmers who dig around for security holes largely for entertainment. Mr. Barnhouse said the group was formed about six months ago and that he found his way in this spring through some long-held friendships.

Mr. Barnhouse, who said he was 26 and lived in Fairfield, Ohio, said most members of the group have full-time jobs, but said Mr. Auernheimer, who lives in Fayetteville, Ark., doesn't have a day job. In an interview last week with The Wall Street Journal, Mr. Auernheimer described himself as a security consultant.

Mr. Auernheimer, who goes by the online name "Weev," attended James Madison University in 1999 and 2000 when he was



Washington County Detention Center

Police photo of Andrew Auernheimer when he was detained Tuesday.

—Joshua Barone contributed to this article.

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14 years old, but didn't complete a degree, according to the National Student Clearinghouse. The university registrar declined to comment.

He claimed credit last year for triggering a change on Amazon.com Inc.'s website that temporarily caused gay-themed books to disappear from the site's sales rankings. Amazon blamed an internal glitch.

The FBI opened last week an investigation of the AT&T breach, after Gawker Media LLC published an account of the incident based on material it received from the computer group. Gawker said last week the FBI has asked it to retain documents related to the incident but said it didn't believe it was a target of the probe.

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