
Hacker in 'plea to be reported'

A computer hacker urged a computer expert to report him to British Telecom after he had shown her how he broke into confidential electronic mailboxes, Southwark Crown Court was told yesterday.

Robert Schifreen gave a demonstration at his home to Mrs Denise Shemuel, who works for *Micronet* computer magazine. After the demonstration she telephoned British Telecom to tell them that he had been abusing the computer system.

She told the court that Mr Schifreen had asked her to visit him saying: "I have something very unusual which you should see." When she got to his home he showed her a list of Prestel users' secret passwords and private numbers.

"He showed me on the computer customer records of Prestel, including people's identity numbers."

Mr Schifreen, aged 22, a freelance computer journalist, of Edgwarebury Gardens, Edgware, north-west London, has denied five charges of

forgery. Stephen Gold, aged 33, of Watt Lane, Sheffield, denies four similar charges. They are alleged to have used the private mailboxes to obtain a wide variety of Prestel services free.

Mr Austin Issard-Davies, for the prosecution, said that after Prestel had been informed of what Mr Schifreen was doing he "carried merrily on his way until February".

"Many times during this case it may have seemed that what these young men were doing was a kind of childish prank designed to twist the tail of British Telecom," he said.

Included among the electronic mailboxes Mr Schifreen had gained access to was that of Mr Tony Coad, his former employer. "Are we really to believe that frames from a mail box, which just happened to belong to a former boss of this defendant, arrived at his home as a result of some sort of freak electronic accident?" Mr Issard-Davies said. The case continues today.

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