

DOJ-CCIPS Offers help in moving TELCO initiative forward:

@ 2012 - I asked close colleagues from DOJ-Computer Crimes & Intellectual Property Section (CCIPS) and DOJ-Fraud to assist myself and several colleagues from the FBI, Financial Services, Telco industry and the NCFTA to seek prosecutive support in advancing the Telecommunications (Telco) initiative, where many cyber-related schemes had moved. My closer friends from DOJ at that time were David Green and Luke Dembosky from CCIPS and Jonathan Rusch – from the Fraud Section, who agreed to host this meeting. From FBIHQ present were representatives from the Cyber and Criminal Divisions, and from industry representatives from the Telco group were: AT&T, Verizon, SPRINT, T-Mobile, and Century Link. From Financial Services, companies included PNC, B of A, Citi, Capital One and Discover.

In kicking this meeting off, I introduced the attendees, and summarized some prior successful projects carried forward via the NCFTA and Cyber Initiative & Resource Fusion Unit (CIRFU FBI Unit at the NCFTA) and IC3 to date. I then explained how we wanted to similarly enlist leadership help from DOJ and FBIHQ and advancing an effort focusing more on cyber related schemes that had increasingly moved to the mobile platform, including SMSishing, ID Theft and socially engineering victims to fall for various schemes, similar to how this was accomplished via email in the past. FBIHQ representatives, advised that such schemes might be considered criminal- as they had a strong Financial Crimes nexus, but also may have a cyber- (account compromise) component – moving them to more of a Cyber FBIHQ Division responsibility. Another aspect noted was that, as fraudsters impersonated certain legitimate service providers, there may be a “trade secret” or Intellectual Property aspect as well.

As the dialogue continued, it was quickly apparent that the FBIHQ representatives could not agree on where such cases should reside (Program management wise). I suggested that the investigations could easily be multi-faceted and as such could be “dual-captioned” enabling Field Offices to essentially “get the best of both worlds” and work cases with resources from two separate squads. The FBIHQ reps largely dismissed this idea.

At this point in the meeting, Luke Dembosky (CICPS and former AUSA in Western Pa) offered - essentially saying “The bad-guys could care less what we call it” and “we’re wasting a lot of time here while they get away with millions of dollars.” Luke further noted that this is 1) serious criminal conduct and 2) worthy of our attention. I further added that in addition to these facts, Industry – represented in the room – is telling us also “this is serious” and they “want to help” if we just offer some law enforcement leadership. This meeting soon adjourned, with no-real-concrete answer coming from FBIHQ as to who would take the lead, although all seemed to be in agreement that something needed to be done.