

Jackie Lacey

District Attorney

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NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney's Cyber Crime Investigation Leads to Prosecution of Nigerian Hacker Accused of County Data Breach

Following a lengthy and complex investigation by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Cyber Investigation Response Team, criminal charges have been filed against a Nigerian national accused of waging a wide-scale email phishing attack on Los Angeles County employees.

District Attorney Jackie Lacey said, "My office has devoted significant resources to developing cutting edge expertise and relationships that allow us to hold transnational cybercriminals accountable."

"My office will work aggressively to bring this criminal hacker and others to Los Angeles County where they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," she added.

Deputy District Attorney Donn Hoffman of the Cyber Crime Division said Austin Kelvin Onaghinor (dob 8/8/79) is charged in a felony complaint for arrest warrant with nine counts including unauthorized computer access and identity theft. Case BA452461 additionally includes an excessive-taking allegation of more than \$500,000.

The defendant is accused of launching an email phishing attack in May that targeted Los Angeles County employees from 15 departments. Phishing scams trick recipients into providing personal identifying information such as usernames and passwords as a way to access a victim's account.

Of 1,000 county email users who received the defendant's message only 108 county employee email accounts were affected.

For the past three years, the District Attorney's Cyber Investigation Response Team has protected the county from attacks on its information technology infrastructure. The team investigates and prosecutes offenders and provides cybersecurity training and technical guidance to county departments.

Since its inception, the team has investigated 85 cases, involving hundreds of thousands of potential victims, and has resulted in several successful prosecutions and restitution totaling nearly \$4 million.

In this instance, the team responded to the security breach, identified the source of the cyber-intrusion and thwarted Onaghinor's attack. If convicted as charged, the defendant faces a maximum possible sentence of 13 years in state prison.

The case remains under investigation by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Cyber Investigation Response Team.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.