

CYBERSECURITY ETHICS

In Defense of Marcus Hutchins

The Man Who Stopped WannaCry

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The Case Overview

A Complex Ethical and Legal Situation

In May 2017, Marcus Hutchins discovered and activated the kill switch that stopped the WannaCry ransomware attack, saving hospitals and critical infrastructure worldwide.

However, in 2011 at age 17, Hutchins created the UPAS Kit - malware containing keyloggers and web injection tools that violated Vermont's computer crime statutes.

Central Question: When a juvenile offender demonstrates rehabilitation through significant public service, how should justice be served?

Defense Under Vermont Law

1. UPAS Kit Violated Vermont §4102

The UPAS Kit's keylogger and web injection capabilities constitute unauthorized access to computer systems under Vermont law.

2. Juvenile Status at Time of Offense

Hutchins was 17 when he created UPAS. Vermont's juvenile justice system (Title 33, Ch. 52) prioritizes rehabilitation over punishment for minors.

3. WannaCry Demonstrates Rehabilitation

By stopping WannaCry, Hutchins proved his transformation from teenage offender to protector of global infrastructure - the objective of juvenile rehabilitation.

Conclusion

Rehabilitation Over Retribution

While Hutchins' creation of UPAS Kit violated Vermont law, the justice system must consider:

- His juvenile status at the time of the offense
- Six years passing between offense and arrest
- His heroic act of stopping WannaCry
- Vermont's commitment to juvenile rehabilitation

Recommendation: Reduced charges or alternative sentencing. Hutchins has already demonstrated the successful rehabilitation that juvenile justice seeks to achieve.

References

Vermont Statutes Title 13, Chapter 87: Computer Crimes

Wired: "Confessions of Marcus Hutchins, the Hacker Who Saved the Internet"

Darknet Diaries Episode 73: WannaCry

PC World: "A Kill Switch is Slowing the Spread of WannaCry"