

INVESTIGATION OF OBSCENE MAIL IN CYBER SPACE – A CASE STUDY

- by **P. Ravi Kiran**, SI, Cyber Crime P.S.
and **C.V Anand** SP, CID.

In the month of December 2002, the family members of an M.P. of Lok Sabha of Hyderabad started receiving obscene e-mails. Initially they thought some mischievous person was sending these mails to tease them and they ignored the mails. But the sender, taking the advantage of the anonymity provided by the Internet and inaction from the M.P., intensified his activities and even threatened to kidnap the daughters of the M.P. with the help of Dawood Ibrahim, and gangrape them publicly on Holi festival day. This created panic among the family members of the M.P. and he then lodged a complaint with Humayun Nagar PS, Hyderabad City. He also raised the matter in the Parliament and brought it to the notice of the Speaker of the Lok-Sabha. In view of the gravity and seriousness of the case, the case was transferred to Cyber Crime PS, CID, Hyderabad for Investigation, as this police station was established exclusively to deal with cyber offences.

During investigation, the Investigating Officer examined all the family members of the M.P. but could not get any useful information to pin point the culprit and the motive. More over, the sender was using different fictitious email IDs for sending the obscene emails. Then the IO decided to track the e-mailer with the help of the Internet Protocol address (I.P. Address).

In order to track down the e-mailer, the header particulars are very important as they contain the originating I.P. Address which is a unique number in the entire world. These IP addresses are assigned by International Assigned Numbers Authority. To send an e-mail, one has to access the Internet connection provided by the ISPs. Whenever a user logs on to the internet, the ISP automatically assigns an I.P. Address to the user who browses the internet. The Internet Service Providers maintain the log details of I.P. Addresses which are assigned to various users.

As such, the I.O. collected the emails received by the family members of the said M.P. along with full header particulars and came to know that the said mails were generated using the I.P. addresses belonging to different ISPs in and around New Delhi, including Emmsons Infotech Limited, New Delhi. Then, the I.O. addressed letters to the concerned ISPs with a request to furnish the user particulars of I.P. Address from where the obscene / threatening emails were generated.

The Emmsons Infotech Limited, which is an ISP in New Delhi informed that some of emails were generated through their I.P. Addresses from Chandigarh and the user name is Mr. Paul Francis who was having an Internet Account with them.

Immediately, the I.O. contacted the family members of the complainant and enquired about Paul Francis. It was then that the elder daughter of the M.P. informed that she knew one Mr. Paul Francis of Chandigarh who came into contact through Internet, but she had never met him in person. Paul Francis was very polite and became a good chat friend. They used to chat with each other daily. They exchanged their personal information including phone numbers, mail Ids. As she was friendly to him, Paul Francis misunderstood her and started expressing his love for her and desired to marry her. But she had no such intention and ignored his proposal. He then started giving obscene, spiteful and dangerous e-mail to threaten her.

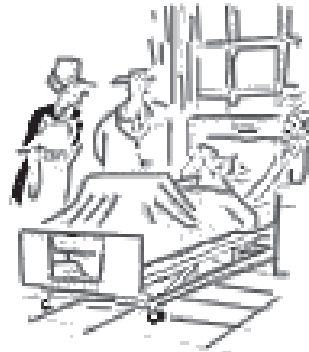
The mystery was unravelled and the accused Mr. Paul Francis was arrested by

a special team of the Cyber Crime PS at his residence in Chandigarh. They seized the personal computer system used by him for transmitting the obscene e-mails.

During interrogation the accused revealed that, since he knew the user ID and password of the victim, he opened her mail box and felt jealous when he read emails in her inbox which indicated that she was friendly with a few others too. So, in order that she develops hatred towards other friends, he sent obscene emails to her using names of the friends of the victim. Moreover, the accused said that he had spent considerable amount of time to convince the victim. It did not materialize and he bore a grudge against the victim and sent obscene emails and finally landed in the jail!



“He’s fluent in 24 computer languages and never says a bloody word to me”.



“Nasty case...wife dropped his hardware onto his software”.

My favorite thing about the Internet is that you get to go into the private world of real creeps without having to smell them.

- **Penn Jillette** (1995-)