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U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Northern District of California
11th Floor, Federal Building
450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36055
San Francisco, California 94102
(415) 436-7200
Fax: (415) 436-7234

Computer Programmer Arrested for Extortion and Mail Fraud Scheme Targeting Google, Inc.

The United States Attorney for the Northern District of California announced today that Michael Anthony Bradley, 32, of Oak Park, California, was arrested yesterday on a criminal complaint filed in San Jose charging him with interfering with commerce by threats or violence in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951, and mail fraud in violation of 18 U.S.C. 1341. Special Agents from the United States Secret Service arrested Mr. Bradley, a self-described computer programmer, yesterday afternoon at the offices of Google, Inc., in Mountain View, California. According to a Secret Service Agent's affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint, Mr. Bradley had demanded $100,000 from Google to stop him from releasing a software program he claimed would allow spammers to defraud Google of millions of dollars. Special Agents simultaneously executed a search warrant of Mr. Bradley's residence, located in Oak Park in Southern California. Mr. Bradley made his initial appearance on the charges this morning before United States Chief Magistrate Judge Patricia V. Trumbull in San Jose federal court. He was released on a $50,000 appearance bond, and on the conditions that he refrain from using any computer or the Internet and avoid all contact with Google and its employees. A preliminary hearing in the matter has been set for April 8, 2004, at 9:30 a.m. before United States Magistrate Judge Howard R. Lloyd. According to the criminal complaint, which was unsealed in San Jose today, Mr. Bradley attempted to defraud and extort money from Google, the Internet company best known for its free search engine, by developing a software program that automates fraudulent "clicks" on "cost-per-click" advertisements utilized by Google. These fraudulent clicks, in turn, were designed to cause Google to make payments that were supposed to be made only for "clicks" made by legitimate Web surfers. The complaint alleges that Mr. Bradley first sent an email requesting a meeting with Google concerning his software program, which he named Google Clique, in early March. In a subsequent face-to-face meeting with Google engineers on March 10, the complaint alleges that Mr. Bradley performed a demonstration of his program, and claimed that it generated false clicks that look like real Internet traffic and were untraceable. The defendant allegedly stated that he would sell it to top spammers if Google did not pay him $100,000, and that Google would lose millions. The maximum statutory penalty for each violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1341 and 1951 is 20 years imprisonment and a fine of $250,000. However, any sentence following conviction would be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and would be imposed in the discretion of the Court. A criminal complaint simply contains allegations against an individual and, as with

all defendants, Mr. Bradley must be presumed innocent unless and until convicted. The investigation was overseen by the Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property (CHIP) Unit of the United States Attorney's Office. Christopher P. Sonderby, Chief of the CHIP Unit, is the Assistant United States Attorney who is prosecuting the case. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by agents from the San Francisco Electronic Crimes Task Force, which is managed by the United States Secret Service. More information concerning the SFECTF can be found at www.ectaskforce.org.

Google, Inc., has cooperated fully in this investigation. A copy of this press release may be found on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/can.

All press inquiries to the U.S. Attorney's Office should be directed to Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher P. Sonderby at (408) 535-5037, or Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Robbins at (415) 436-6815.