



Department of Justice

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MONTANA MAN SENTENCED FOR RECEIPT OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

BILLINGS – Michael Joseph Difrancesco, a 48-year-old resident of Bozeman, was sentenced today to a term of 60 months in federal prison in connection with his guilty plea to receipt of child pornography. Difrancesco was also ordered to pay a special assessment of \$100, forfeit his computer equipment and will be under supervision for 10 years

In an Offer of Proof filed by the United States, the government stated it would have proved at trial the following:

U.S. Immigration and Enforcement (ICE) agents were investigating allegations of child pornography access by users utilizing the peer-to-peer file sharing network. One investigation involved an individual in Bozeman who had child pornography available to share via a file sharing program, beginning in April 2008 and continuing through July 2008. The computer IP address was tracked to the Difrancesco residence in Bozeman.

On July 17, 2008, agents executed a search warrant on Difrancesco's residence. When questioned, Difrancesco admitted that he used the peer-to-peer file sharing program Limewire and that he used the program to search for child pornography images. A subsequent forensic examination of his computer equipment revealed hundreds of images and movies of child pornography that Difrancesco had received via the Internet during 2003 through 2008 and continued to possess until the service of the warrant. Difrancesco possessed images and movies of children clearly prepubescent and children engaged in sadistic or masochistic abuse or other depictions of violence.

The investigation was a cooperative effort between the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Montana Division of Criminal Investigation, the Helena Police Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Marcia K. Hurd prosecuted the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the Department of Justice launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

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