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U.S. indicts 21 over Romanian-based Internet fraud

Tue Dec 12, 2006 3:58pm ET

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CHICAGO, Dec 12 (Reuters) - U.S. officials on Tuesday announced the indictment of 21 people accused of bilking eBay bidders out of $5 million through an Internet fraud scheme that originated in Romania.

The operation contacted people who had unsuccessfully bid on items for sale on the online auction site, telling them they had a second chance to obtain the items if they wired money to addresses in the Chicago area where the seller's agent would complete the transaction.

The money was divided between operatives in the United States and Romania and the buyers got nothing in return.

"This case is an example of using new technology to commit an old-fashioned fraud scheme," said Patrick Fitzgerald, the U.S. attorney in Chicago. "There is no refuge in cyberspace for those who use the Internet to cloak and facilitate criminal activity as law enforcement is becoming ever more adept at investigating cyber-crime."

About 2,000 people were victimized across the United States between November 2003 and August 2006, the announcement said.

Each of the 21 people was charged with one count of wire fraud. Most were from the Chicago area and all but six have been taken into custody, it added.

Investigators said half or more of the fraudulently obtained money was sent to conspirators outside the United States, most of them believed to be living in Romania.

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MARKET VIEW

EBAY (eBay Inc)

Last:	$31.78
Change:	-0.12 (-0.38%)
Revenue (ttm):	M
EPS:	
Market Cap:	M
Time:	4:00pm ET

1d 5d 3m 6m 1y 2y 5y max

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Margaret Whitman
President, Chief Executive Officer and Director

Salary: USD 995,016
Bonus: USD 1,697,651
Age: 50

Margaret C. Whitman serves eBay as President and Chief Executive Officer. She has served in that capacity since February 1998 and as a director since... Full Bio

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P/E (12 mo. trailing)	Higher
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Dividend Yield	Lower
Sales Growth (12 mo. trailing)	Higher
EPS (12 mo. trailing)	Lower
ROI (12 mo. trailing)	Lower

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