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Richard Smith (pictured seventh from right), CS&RS, with fraud and cybercrime partners at the EC3.

Highlights

- Customer Security & Risk Services participated in Europol's Days of Action at the European Cybercrime Centre.
- Operation targeted online airline ticket fraud.
- 113 individuals were detained and 70 arrests made.

Fraud and Cybercrime Fighters



Story contact: [Murray, Carolyn](#) on: 5/16/2014

On April 8 and 9 Franchise Integrity's Customer Security & Risk Services (CS&RS) team worked with [Europol](#) on its "largest ever attack upon online fraud and illegal immigration," as stated in its [press release](#). Richard Smith, senior business leader, CS&RS, represented MasterCard on site at the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) in The Hague, Netherlands, during the Days of Action aimed at airline ticket fraud.



The Plan of Attack

The operation's strategy was to intercept passengers using airline tickets that were purchased online with fake or stolen credit card numbers. The campaign covered 68 airports in 32 countries across the globe and resulted in the detention of 113 individuals and 70 arrests.

Into Action

The success of the action required the participation of multiple stakeholders:

- Airline representatives identified suspicious ticket transactions and alerted the EC3
- For MasterCard transactions, Smith and his CS&RS colleagues in other regions contacted issuers to confirm whether the transaction was fraudulent
- Upon issuer confirmation, notifications were sent to the airports, and waiting law enforcement detained the travelers
- Detainees were interviewed by law enforcement to identify the source of fraud

Rounding Up Fraudsters

More than 265 suspicious transactions across all payment brands were reported to the EC3. CS&RS contacted 47 customers around the globe resulting in urgent confirmation of 32 incidents of fraud on MasterCard transactions. Through interviews with detainees, law enforcement identified and subsequently moved to shut down the fraudulent travel web sites involved. In some cases, the investigation uncovered other criminal enterprises such as illegal immigration, sex crimes and drug trafficking.

Mission Accomplished

This was Europol's second initiative of this kind and the first in which MasterCard was invited to participate. Smith notes that the power of our global coverage and our strong, trusted relationships with issuing banks made MasterCard a valued partner in an operation that advances our own safety and security strategy. Said Troels Oerting, Head of the EC3, "This successful operation is a milestone for all involved...and marks another goal accomplished in fighting cybercrime, a threat which is global by its very nature."

Tools

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[Paul, Ronald](#) 5/20/2014 10:54 AM

Well Done! I've actually been a victim of this first hand where someone got a hold of my credit card info and purchased tickets. Fortunately I was on the phone with the issuer while the second purchase was being



Lester, Mary



attempted.



 **Phillips, Greg** 5/20/2014 9:26 AM

This is great publicity. The arrests will make buyers think twice about buying from questionable travel sites. Keep up the good work!



 **Simon, Eileen** 5/19/2014 3:43 PM

Great job, all! Congrats to Richard and the Europe team for your partnership with Europol and positive results.

