

Private eye puts the byte on hacker's illegal rugby league website



Offside ... Liam, described as a computer hacking genius / Pic: Nic Gibson *Source:* The Daily Telegraph

TWO hours before the NRL season kicked off, a young hacker was politely told to shut down his illegal website which had been streaming live matches -- or face going to jail.

The NRLfixit.com.au website was started last season by a Rozelle youngster just out of high school.

In two days, "Liam" -- as he wants to be known -- had 6000 members and by the end of last season the number had grown to 12,000. He believed he would have tripled that this year.

Flushed with the success of his site, the young entrepreneur moved from amateur hacker to budding businessman and began looking for sponsors.

But NRL officials were not impressed.

"Organisations pay large sums of money for the rights to televise these matches," NRL spokesman John Brady said. "And, like any brand, we have to protect ourselves and our clients against piracy."

The NRL realised that someone was streaming their games -- but hunting down whom, where and how was beyond their expertise.

Enter private eye and cyber crime expert Ken Gamble.

What he found amazed him. The site was sourced back to the young hacker, in the heart of Balmain territory.

"This was a very smart kid with no formal training but an absolute computer genius," Mr Gamble said.

A team of cyber experts working for Mr Gamble tracked down 20-year-old Liam, living at home with his mum and dad at Rozelle.

The site was hosted by a website in Arizona, streamed from New Zealand and then put on NRLfixit.com.

Liam, a landscape gardener, said he started the site as a fan and it just grew.

"I had one guy in Germany who said 50 people would come to his house when he showed a game live," Liam said.

"The same thing in Las Vegas."

Liam, a Wests Tigers supporter, said he was spending more and more time working on the site and saw the chance to make some money.

"That's when the NRL got a bit unhappy and got someone to hunt me down. They were pretty lenient to me because of my age and because I agreed to stop broadcasting games."

Mr Gamble said his company, Internet Fraud Watchdog, knew of many other sports being illegally streamed around the world.

"It's a problem for all sports, not just rugby league," he said.

"We are working for a number of companies doing the same thing."

Mr Gamble said his company had been attacked by hackers furious that he had the NRL streaming site shut down.

"We will track them down, too," Mr Gamble said.

He said cyber crime was now a daily occurrence because there were "no laws in cyberspace".

Internet Fraud Watchdog and the International Association of Cybercrime Prevention will hold the 4th Regional Conference on Cybercrime and International Criminal Cooperation in Sydney on May 19 and 20.

Related Coverage

- [Hackers eye smartphones, social sites](#) *The Australian, 6 hours ago*
- [Hackers target Metro website](#) *Adelaide Now, 1 day ago*
- [Australia is 'at war' with hackers](#) *Adelaide Now, 7 days ago*
- [Cyber crime fighters to meet in Sydney](#) *The Daily Telegraph, 8 days ago*
- [Attack targets French finance ministry](#) *The Daily Telegraph, 7 Mar 2011*