

# Who Was the 12th Russian Spy at Microsoft?

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July 14, 2010

## Global

Alexey Karetnikov tested software at the Redmond giant

By Benjamin Carlson

July 14, 2010

This article is from the archive of our partner ***the wire***.

On the heels of the Russian spy swap, Microsoft software tester Alexey Karetnikov has been deported for allegedly beginning to "set up shop" as a spy. The young man was not charged with any crime, however, but was sent home for violating immigration laws. What we do know about this latest person to emerge in connection with the alleged espionage ring?

**He Made Little Progress** Jerry Markon of the Washington Post quotes an anonymous senior law enforcement official who explains that Karetnikov "was just in the early stages" and that he had been watched closely from the moment he arrived in the U.S. Law enforcement believes he "obtained absolutely no information."

**Just an Entry-Level Software Tester** Jeremy Kirk at Computerworld explains: "The 12th person detained for allegedly spying for Russia worked as an entry-level software tester at Microsoft for nine months, the company confirmed Wednesday. ... A Facebook profile for a person named Alexey V. Karetnikov says he graduated last year from St. Petersburg State Polytechnic University and is married. His current employer is listed as Microsoft, with a previous job as a senior developer at a company called Neobit."

**Working Solo?** Charles Arthur of the Guardian broaches the obvious question: what's the tie to Anna Chapman? His answer: "It is unclear whether Karetnikov was part of the same spy ring that included Anna Chapman, who was based in the country's capital. One official told the Washington Post that Karetnikov had obtained a job in the US and was 'just doing the things he needed to do to establish cover'."

**Not the First Spy in Seattle** Eric Engelman of TechFlash looks back to a previous case: "This is the second time the Seattle tech community has had a brush with the Russian spy scandal. It earlier emerged that one of the alleged spies, known as Tracey Foley, worked as a contract field agent for Seattle online real estate company Redfin. Foley, who lived in the Boston area, was later identified by U.S. authorities as Elena Vavilova."

**One of Many Problem Employees at Microsoft** The staff of Electronista looks back to recent HR snafus: "The hiring of a spy is nonetheless the latest in a series of employee-related blows at Microsoft. It recently saw J Allard and Robbie Bach leave amid unconfirmed rumors of discontent with strategy. A decision to cancel the Kin after just six weeks on sale also saw employees rolled into the Windows Phone division after accusations of infighting, and it recently cut hundreds of jobs in an effort to trim overhead as it hires in other areas."

**Former Company Tied to Russian Spy Service?** Anastasia Ustinova reports in Bloomberg that there may be a connection between his previous employer and his U.S. activity: "He worked for a company called 'Neobit' in addition to Microsoft, according to the Facebook page. A St. Petersburg-based software developer called OOO NeoBIT lists Katernikov's university among its partners and the Federal Security Service, the main successor to the Soviet-era KGB, among its clients, according to the company's website."

**Approved of Folk Rock** Ryan Tate of Gawker digs up the personal details from Karetnikov's Facebook page. Tate finds that he "was strangely silent about the Russian spy ring bust, going quiet despite being updated multiple times per week *before* the bust (and Karetnikov was only detained last week, said the *Washington Post*). It called hippie folk rock, long a favorite of subversive troublemakers, 'very nice music.' There was a discussion -- in Russian! -- of remote and surveillance technology."

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