

Feds arrest Russians allegedly behind 'world's largest' pirated ebook library

Federal law enforcement arrested and charged two Russian individuals with criminal copyright infringement over their alleged involvement with the pirated ebook Z-Library. Z-Library, which has been around since 2009, billed itself as the "world's largest ebook library" before the US government shut down the site earlier this month.

According to the Department of Justice, the pair in question, Anton Napolsky and Valeriia Ermakova, were arrested in Argentina at the request of the US government on November 3rd. In addition to criminal copyright infringement, the two are also facing charges of money laundering and wire fraud. The US government shut down and seized the domains associated with Z-Library at the time of their arrest, but, as noted by *Ars Technica*, some users are still able to access the site on the dark web.

"The defendants are alleged to have operated a website for over a decade whose central purpose was providing stolen intellectual property, in violation of copyright laws," Michael Driscoll, the FBI's assistant director in charge said in a statement. "Intellectual property theft crimes deprive their victims of both ingenuity and hard-earned revenue."

Z-Library housed over 11 million pirated ebook titles and academic papers users could download and read for free. Over the years, the site emerged as a resource for students who

couldn't afford to buy pricey college textbooks. The news of its shutdown rippled across social media earlier this month, with a report from *Slate* highlighting its impact on college students and others who can't afford to access educational materials.

As pointed out by *Vice*, Napolsky and Ermakova's arrest comes shortly after the Authors Guild, an organization for writers that advocates for copyright protection, submitted a complaint to the Office of the US Trade Representative on October 7th. The complaint cites the growing trend of users on TikTok promoting Z-Library as a way to get books for free, and notes that the "zlibrary" hashtag has over 19 million views on the platform. It also mentions another pirated ebook library, Libgen, arguing both sites have an "incalculable and truly devastating" impact on the writing community.

<https://www.theverge.com/2022/11/20/23469142/feds-arrest-russians-z-library-pirated-ebooks>