

## Hacking scandal Britain

# This scandal is all my fault, says salesman

By Matt Blake  
Crime Correspondent

When a Vodafone technician taught the salesman Steve Nott how easy it was to hack into his mobile phone, he thought the tabloid press would love the story. They did – but just not in quite the way Mr Nott had imagined.

The father-of-two was driving through the Welsh countryside in June 1999 when his mobile phone mysteriously lost its signal.

Desperate to pick up his messages, he stopped at a petrol station to call his service provider. To his astonishment, the technician told him he could hack into his phone from any other if he knew the access PIN.

Like most people he had never changed it from its default setting – 3333 – and it worked straight away.

“I was gobsmacked by how easy it was,” said Mr Nott yesterday. “I spent the next couple of months playing games with my mates and work colleagues. But I soon realised that this issue of easily being able to intercept voicemail, delete messages, change welcome greetings and change the PIN was too serious and decided it had to be exposed.” He called the *Daily Mirror*. “They told me it was a

great story,” he said. When they hadn’t run a story two weeks later, Mr Nott, from Cwmbran, South Wales, called *The Sun*. “I showed the reporter everything – he was really excited.” He didn’t hear back. Eventually he persuaded BBC Radio 5Live to interview him and the *South Wales Argus* ran a story. He also wrote to the Department of Trade and Industry, and to MI5.

On 18 July this year, Mr Nott was

Steve Nott



After being shown how to hack into his phone in 1999, he contacted the *Daily Mirror* and *Sun*, but was surprised they did not print a story about it

visited by detectives from Operation Weeting, the criminal investigation into phone hacking by journalists.

“I never could understand why the papers didn’t run the story. They seemed so keen at first. I now think I know why no one ever called me back.”

News International declined to comment while a spokesman for *Trinity Mirror* said: “We are not going to dignify this with a comment.”