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# What is a Brute Force Attack? | Definition, Types & How It Works



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# What is a Brute Force Attack?

A brute force attack is a hacking method that uses trial and error to crack passwords, login credentials, and encryption keys. It is a simple yet reliable tactic for unauthorized access to individual accounts, organizations' systems, and networks.

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The hacker tries multiple usernames and passwords, often using a computer to test various combinations, until they find the correct login information.

  
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The name "brute force" comes from attackers using excessively forceful attempts to access user accounts. Despite being an old cyberattack method, brute force attacks are tried and tested and remain a popular tactic with hackers.

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# Different Types of Brute Force Attacks



## Simple Brute Force Attacks

A simple brute force attack occurs when a hacker attempts to guess a user's login credentials manually without using any software. This is typically through standard password combinations or personal identification number (PIN) codes. These can reveal extremely simple passwords and PINs. For example, a password that is set as "guest12345".

## Dictionary Attacks

A dictionary attack is a basic form of brute force hacking in which the attacker selects a target, then tests possible passwords against that individual's username. The attack method itself is not technically considered a brute force attack, but it can play an important role in a bad actor's password-cracking process.

## Reverse Brute Force Attacks

A reverse brute force attack sees an attacker begin the process with a known password, which is typically discovered through a network breach. They use that password to search for a matching login credential using lists of millions of usernames. Attackers may also use a commonly used weak password, such as "Password123," to search through a database of usernames for a match.

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## Hybrid Brute Force Attacks

A hybrid brute force attack is when a hacker combines a dictionary attack method with a simple brute force attack. It begins with the hacker knowing a username, then carrying out a dictionary attack and simple brute force methods to discover an account login combination. These attacks are used to figure out combo passwords that mix common words with random characters.



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## Credential Stuffing

Credential stuffing preys on users' weak password etiquette. Attackers collect username and password combinations they have stolen, which they then test on other websites to see if they can gain access to additional user accounts. It is successful if people use the same username and password combination or reuse passwords for various accounts and social media profiles.

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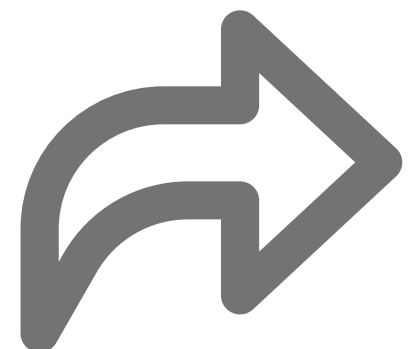


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