

Glossary terms

Terms and definitions

Adversarial artificial intelligence (AI): A technique that manipulates artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) technology to conduct attacks more efficiently

Business Email Compromise (BEC): A type of phishing attack where a threat actor impersonates a known source to obtain financial advantage

Computer virus: Malicious code written to interfere with computer operations and cause damage to data and software

Cryptographic attack: An attack that affects secure forms of communication between a sender and intended recipient

Hacker: Any person who uses computers to gain access to computer systems, networks, or data

Malware: Software designed to harm devices or networks

Password attack: An attempt to access password secured devices, systems, networks, or data

Phishing: The use of digital communications to trick people into revealing sensitive data or deploying malicious software

Physical attack: A security incident that affects not only digital but also physical environments where the incident is deployed

Physical social engineering: An attack in which a threat actor impersonates an employee, customer, or vendor to obtain unauthorized access to a physical location

Social engineering: A manipulation technique that exploits human error to gain private information, access, or valuables

Social media phishing: A type of attack where a threat actor collects detailed information about their target on social media sites before initiating the attack

Spear phishing: A malicious email attack targeting a specific user or group of users, appearing to originate from a trusted source

Supply-chain attack: An attack that targets systems, applications, hardware, and/or software to locate a vulnerability where malware can be deployed

USB baiting: An attack in which a threat actor strategically leaves a malware USB stick for an employee to find and install to unknowingly infect a network

Virus: refer to “computer virus”

Vishing: The exploitation of electronic voice communication to obtain sensitive information or to impersonate a known source

Watering hole attack: A type of attack when a threat actor compromises a website frequently visited by a specific group of users