**Preface to the Third**  
 **Edition**

The ﬁrst edition of *Security Engineering* was published in 2001 and the second  
 in 2008. Since then there have been several big changes.

The most obvious is that the smartphone has displaced the PC and laptop.

Most of the world’s population now walk around with a computer that’s also a  
 phone, a camera and a satnav; and the apps that run on these magic devices  
 have displaced many of the things we were building ten years ago. Taxi rides  
 are now charged by ride hailing apps rather than by taxi meters. Banking has  
 largely gone online, with phones starting to displace credit cards. Energy saving  
 is no longer about your meter talking to your heating system but about both  
 talking to your phone. Social networking has taken over many people’s lives,  
 driving everything from advertising to politics.

A related but less visible change is the move to large centralised server farms.

Sensitive data have moved from servers in schools, doctors’ o�ces and law ﬁrms  
 to cloud service providers. Many people no longer do their writing on word  
 processing software on their laptop but on Google Docs or O�ce365 (I’m writing  
 this on Overleaf). This has consequences. Security breaches can happen at a  
 scale no-one would have imagined twenty years ago. Compromises of tens of  
 millions of passwords, or credit cards, have become almost routine. And in 2013,  
 we discovered that ﬁfteen years’ worth of UK hospital medical records had been  
 sold to 1200 organisations worldwide without the consent of the patients (who  
 were still identifable via their postcodes and dates of birth).

The biggest game-changer of the last decade was probably the Snowden rev-

elations, also in 2013, when over 50,000 Top Secret documents about the NSA’s  
 signals intelligence activities were leaked to the press. The scale and intru-

siveness of government surveillance surprised even cynical security engineers.  
 This brings us to the third big change, which is a much better understanding  
 of security threats. In addition to understanding the capabilities and priorities  
 of western intelligence agencies, we have a reasonably good idea of what the  
 Chinese, the Russians and even the Syrians get up to.

And where the money is, the crooks follow too. The last decade has also

seen the emergence of a cyber-crime ecosystem, with malware writers providing  
 the tools to subvert millions of machines, many of which are used as criminal  
 infrastructure while others are subverted in various ways into defrauding their  
 users. We have a team at Cambridge that studies this, and so do dozens of

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other researcher groups worldwide. The rise of cybercrime is changing policing,  
 and other state activity too: cryptocurrencies are not just making it easier to  
 write ransomware, but undermining ﬁnancial regulation. And then there are  
 individual threats such as cyber-bullying, which usually fall below the threshold  
 for criminal prosecution but which cause real distress, are made easier by social  
 networks, and happen at such a scale as to matter.

So online harms now engage all sorts of people from banks and the military

down to schoolteachers. It is ever more important to measure the costs of these  
 harms, and the e↵ectiveness of the measures we deploy to mitigate them.

Some of the changes would have really surprised someone who read my book

ten years ago and then spent a decade in solitary conﬁnement. For example, the  
 multilevel security industry is moribund, despite being the beneﬁciary of billions  
 of dollars of US government funding over forty years; the Pentagon’s entire in-  
 formation security philosophy – of mandating architectures to stop information  
 ﬂowing downward from Top Secret to Secret to Conﬁdential to Unclassiﬁed –  
 has been abandoned as unworkable. While architecture still matters, the em-  
 phasis has shifted to ecosystems. Given that bugs are ubiquitous and exploits  
 inevitable, we had better be good at detecting exploits, ﬁxing bugs and recov-  
 ering from attacks. The game is no longer trusted systems but coordinated

disclosure, DevSecOps and resilience.

What might the future hold? A likely game-changer is that as we put soft-

ware into safety-critical systems like cars and medical devices, and connect them  
 to the Internet, safety and security engineering are converging. This is leading  
 to real strains; while security engineers ﬁx bugs quickly, safety engineers like to  
 test systems rigorously against standards that change slowly if at all. A wicked  
 problem is how we will patch durable goods. At present, you might get security  
 patches for your phone for three years and your laptop for ﬁve; you’re expected  
 to buy a new one after that. But cars last for ﬁfteen years on average and if  
 we’re suddenly asked to scrap them after ﬁve the environmental costs won’t be  
 acceptable. So tell me, if you’re writing navigation software today for a car that  
 will launch in 2022, what toolchain will you choose to ensure that you’ll be able  
 to keep on shipping security patches in 2032, 2042 and 2052?

Finally, there has been a sea change in the political environment. After

decades in which political leaders considered technology policy to be for anoraks,  
 and generally took the line of least resistance, the reports of Russian interference  
 in the Brexit referendum and the Trump election really got their attention. The  
 prospect of losing your job can concentrate the mind wonderfully. The close  
 attention of lawmakers is changing the game, ﬁrst with tighter rules (such as  
 Europe’s General Data Protection Regulation) and second as software and online  
 connectivity ﬁnd their way into products that are already regulated for safety,  
 from cars and railway signals to children’s toys.

The questions the security engineer has to ask today are just the same as a

decade ago: what are we seeking to prevent, and will the proposed mechanisms  
 actually work? However, the canvas on which we work is now much broader.  
 Almost all human life is there.

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