



The ex-hacker

STARTER

1 Find the answers to these questions as quickly as you can.

- 1 Which group hacked into Hotmail?
- 2 What kind of computer crime did Internet bank customers face in 2004?
- 3 Which hacker was sent to jail for fraud?
- 4 What was the effect of the 1996 raid on Scotland Yard?
- 5 Which of the cases reported here involved teenagers?
- 6 How did MyDoom.O affect search engines?

1

Kevin Mitnick is the hackers' hero. His latest spell in jail was a 46-month sentence for fraud relating to breaking into the systems of several multinational corporations. He was released on condition that he did not have any contact with a computer.

2

In March 2000, a Welsh teenager allegedly stole information from more than 26,000 credit card accounts across Britain, the US, Japan, Canada and Thailand, and published the details on the Internet. FBI agents and British police raided the home of Raphael Gray, 18, and arrested him and his friend. He has been charged with 10 counts of downloading unauthorised information.

3

In May 2004 an Internet worm, called Sasser, knocked out post office computers in Taiwan and Germany. Three hundred thousand train passengers were stranded in Australia after communications between drivers and signal boxes were cut. Sasser attacked Windows NT, 2000 and XP operating systems via the Internet. An 18-year-old German, Sven Jaschan, admitted he was the author of the virus.

4

Customers of Internet banks faced a new phishing scam in 2004. A Trojan horse program was circulated via email. Once opened, the program substituted a bogus website address for any bank details stored in the computer. When customers tried to go to the website of their bank, they were taken to the false site. When they entered their account details and passwords, crooks used them to empty their accounts.

5

Hotmail, Microsoft's free email service, was hacked into last September, exposing the correspondence of more than 40m users. A group calling itself Hackers Unite posted a Web address with details of how to access any Hotmail account. The service was shut down for five hours.

6

The UK Department of Trade and Industry has twice been prey to hackers, once in 1996 and again in 2000 when a DTI computer was programmed to reroute email. The Home Office investigated nine cases of hacking last year, one of which was the leaking of a report on a murder. In August 1996 hackers ran up a £1m phone bill for Scotland Yard but did not access files.

7

In July 2004, a new variant of MyDoom, MyDoom.O, attacked search engines such as Yahoo, Lycos and Altavista. The search engines received thousands of emails generated by the virus which forced them to slow down. Google stopped working for a time in the US, UK and France. An earlier version included an attachment. When opened, it sent an email to every address in the victim's address book.

LISTENING

2 Think about these questions before you listen.

- 1 How could you hack into a system?
- 2 How could you stop people hacking into a system?

3

Now listen to Part 1 of the recording to check your answers to Task 2 and to find the answers to these questions:

- 1 What was Ralph arrested for?
- 2 What does he do now?
- 3 Why does he say people are too trusting?
- 4 What passwords does he suggest for trying to get into a system?
- 5 What does a firewall do?
- 6 What is the advantage of a callback system?
- 7 To prevent hacking, what sort of passwords should you avoid?
- 8 What do event logs show?

4

Now listen to Part 2 of the recording and find the answers to these questions:

- 1 How did Ralph start thinking about computer security?
- 2 How did he find the most senior ID in the American company's system?
- 3 According to Ralph, why do people hack?
- 4 Why did he and his friend hack?
- 5 How did the police find him?
- 6 Why does he say companies should use his services?
- 7 Do hackers know each other?
- 8 What's the difference between Hollywood hackers and the real world?
- 9 How risky is credit card use on the Internet?
- 10 What advice does he give for people intending to use credit cards over the Internet?

5  Now listen to both parts again to find the answers to these questions:

- 1 What evidence did Ralph and his friend leave to show that they had hacked into the American company's system?
- 2 What is a 'white hat' hacker?
- 3 What two ways does Ralph give for hacking into a system?
- 4 What terms does Ralph use to describe someone obsessed by computers?
- 5 How does he maintain contact with the policeman who arrested him?
- 6 How does he describe his lack of enthusiasm for the Hollywood hacker?
- 7 What does he mean by 'It's the retailers who get done'?
- 8 What's the problem with using smart cards for Internet purchases?

LANGUAGE WORK Phrasal verbs

A phrasal verb is a verb + preposition combination. For example, *look up*, *take down*, *turn over*. Phrasal verbs are common in informal, spoken English. Sometimes they have a more formal one word equivalent, for example, *work out* = determine.

Often phrasal verbs have two meanings.

One we can work out from the meaning of the two words separately:

She looked up at the roof.

A special meaning which does not easily relate to the separate meanings of the words:

She looked up a word in the dictionary.

6 Study these phrasal verbs from the Task 1 texts and the recording:

break into	grow up	throw away
get into	phone up	log on
hack into	run up	find out
go about	keep at	track down
set about	shut down	hand over
keep ahead		

- 1 Hackers try to passwords so they can penetrate a system.
- 2 Don't your password to anyone who asks for it.
- 3 The police Ralph by talking to his friends and acquaintances.
- 4 Some hackers systems to get commercially valuable information.
- 5 When you to a network, you have to provide an ID.
- 6 How do you hacking into a system?
- 7 Hackers may, pretending to be from your company, and ask for your password.
- 8 Never your credit card receipts where someone can find them.
- 9 Ralph was a hacker as a teenager but he's now and become more responsible.
- 10 a system is strictly illegal nowadays.
- 11 It's a constant race to of the hackers.

7 Replace the verb in *italics* with a phrasal verb of similar meaning. All the phrasal verbs required have been used in this book.

- 1 Don't *discard* your credit card receipts; they could help fraudsters.
- 2 Trying to *penetrate* computer systems is against the law.
- 3 The typical hacker is a young person who has not *matured* yet.
- 4 The best way to *begin* hacking into a system is to try to get hold of a password.
- 5 If someone *telephones* you and asks for your password, don't *provide* it.
- 6 Hackers *closed* Hotmail for five hours.
- 7 Hackers *accumulated* a telephone bill of £1m for Scotland Yard.
- 8 The difficult thing was to *determine* how the website would look.
- 9 So you won't forget, *record* the ID number the support technician gives you.
- 10 *Examine* the manufacturers' websites before you phone for help.