

Keith Palacios  
Mr. Grageda  
January 14, 2002  
ITGS

## **Computer Hacking**

### Criterion A: Describing the issue

In this day and age, there are always people who try to get something for free. In the banking world there are bank robbers, in the malls or shopping districts there are shoplifters, but in the computer world there are people called hackers. Hackers are people who use their computer skills to gain unauthorized access to files via the internet. This process is also called “hacking”. Hacking first became a problem in the 1990’s, because that is when technology appeared to be getting more advanced, that is when the internet was introduced to the world. The internet is a way of communication between people and a way of accessing files in just mere minutes. Along with all these good things, there came some bad things. In the shadows of the internet lurked hackers, because the internet served as a hallway with doors, and each door would lead to different files, and they walked around with a lock pick, being able to access any door that they chose, and get the files. This caused a big problem to the people whose files they were “hacking” into, because it is a violation of the people’s rights, the right to privacy. Now people all over the world are trying to discover new technology to protect themselves from hackers, but all efforts, so far, have been in vain, because there are still hackers and they still are able to access files.

### Criterion B: IT Background on the issue

The early history of hackers is centered on MIT in the 1950’s and 1960’s. Naturally curious and intelligent MIT students who had been exploring the phone switching network and the control systems of the Tech Model Railroad Club were drawn to the computers of the MIT Artificial Intelligence Lab (MIT AI Lab). This was the “Golden Age” of the computer hacker. The machines were large, slow, cumbersome to use, and it took an extraordinary effort to make the do even the simplest computation. As computers spread to other parts of the country, so did the hacker culture. Largely initiated by hackers who had their beginnings at MIT, the mid 1960’s saw centers of hacker culture develop at other universities such as Carnegie Mellon University, and Stanford University. The third wave of hackers activity was born in northern California without direct genealogy to the MIT hacker. It started with the Homebrew Computer Club in the San Francisco bay area. This was a group of electronic hobbyist with a common interest in the then radical idea of building their own computers. Because the size and cost of the early computers, early hackers were restricted to using a small number of machines built by large companies and installed at universities or industrial research centers. This third wave of hackers wanted their own machines that they could not only program at home, but also build and modify the computer hard ware at home. It was this group of hackers,

which includes legendary figures such as Lee Felsenstein, Steve Dompier, Steve Wozniak, Steve Jobs, and Bill Gates, that formed the foundation for the entire personal computer industry of today.

A recent event that occurred that involved hacking was when Wendell Dingus broke into US Air Force systems and NASA systems in 1995. There was no indication that Wendell was trying to sell classified information to another country. The US is being compensated \$40,000 and if he was a threat to national security would he only get 6 months of home monitoring. Seems if Wendell was a real threat they would need to lock him up for a while, not just send him home.

#### Criterion C: Analyzing the impact of the issue

The reason why so many people are enraged of the idea of “Hacking” is because some people files are very important or “Top Secret” and they do not want that information to fall into the wrong hands. An example of this is when a certain company has confidential files or information, and the company’s competitors hire a “hacker” to hack into that company’s computer and steal their information so that they can wrongfully copy their ideas. The People that are most affected are big companies ,like GM or Microsoft, and the government. This is why governments spend a lot of time and money in research to find a way to stop all hackers, because it is no longer just someone worrying about some file of theirs getting stolen, it’s a matter of national security. Another reason why people don’t like hackers is because they are able to get into sites that require certain passwords that you legally can obtain by purchasing a membership. The people that own the site are being ripped off because someone is using their site and not paying for it, it is practically stealing.

#### Criterion D: Solutions to the problem arising from the issue

Ever since people realized that hackers are a threat to society, they have tried many different ways to try to stop them. Some software companies have developed new software and security systems to protect your computer and the files that are inside them. The software’s are usually call firewalls. But for me the only way you can help protect the world from hackers, is to spread the word. You should tell people about the issue with hackers, so that when they find out about it, they will try to do what they can to stop them.

#### Criterion E: Selection and using sources

[www.netsecurity.org/text/articles/history.html](http://www.netsecurity.org/text/articles/history.html)

