



## Hacking

### What is hacking?

In the truest sense of the word, a "hacker" is a dedicated programming expert who believes in sharing his expertise and experiences with other hackers. A hacker does not believe in vandalizing or maliciously destroying data, or in stealing data of any kind. A "cracker" is a cyber burglar or vandal - an individual or group intent on causing malicious harm to a network or computer, or to steal information beneficial to themselves like passwords, credit card numbers and the like. For ease of use, the term "hacker" is used here to refer to either a hacker or cracker, as someone who enters or tries to enter your computer or network without authorization.

### What kind of information can a hacker steal from my computer?

Personal information, names address, financial information, even the account information for your ISP and passwords, in short anything stored on your computer can be obtained by a hacker. A [Trojan](#) may record each and every keystroke you make, save the information to a hidden file, and automatically upload it to the hacker's computer.

### What else can a hacker do?

There are a number of reasons why a hacker would want to break into your computer. He may use your computer and ISP account for illegal activity, like distributing child pornography. One of the most recent uses of Trojans is to cause DDoS (distributive denial of service) attacks. In a DDoS attack, the client commands all of the "servers" located on individual PCs to attack a single website. Thousands of individual PCs can be commanded to access a website like eBay or Yahoo at the same time, clogging the site's bandwidth and causing an interruption of service.

### What can I do to protect my computer?

- Only download or accept files from reliable sources.
- Use a [firewall](#) to block unauthorized access to your computer.
- Install a good [virus scanner program](#) and update virus information files often
- Do not keep passwords, bank or financial account numbers, social security numbers or other personal and confidential information on your computer's hard drive.

### Additional Resources

CERT: [Understanding Denial-of-Service Attacks](#)

CERT: [Good Security Habits](#)