

Computer 'hackers' surface at Capitol

By Joseph Michalsky

Do computer hackers exist here at Capitol Campus? Are programs being unknowingly altered or copied?

"I imagine there are (hackers)," said Terry Majzlik, the Operations Coordinator for the computer center here on campus. "I don't like to see it," she said and added that although hackers do exist, there is really no way to determine who the culprits are.

"Hackers are an essential part of the computer center

here at Capitol," said Andrew (not his real name), a computer hacker here at Capitol.

Computers fascinate many students who want to learn everything about them.

"I am a hacker, or more appropriately, a human being who happens to be obsessed with computers," said Andrew. "I want to learn everything I can about computers."

Another hacker, Phil (not his real name) admitted to the simplicity of obtaining someone else's program.

"If I want a program from someone else, I just copy it out

of his file," he said. "You don't need to break in."

While Andrew and Phil admitted to being hackers, Dan (not his real name) took a different approach.

"I resent your negative usage," he said. "You give the term 'hacker' a negative connotation by associating it with computer crime. Many hackers are simply interested people who are doing nothing illegal."

An example would be the "video games in the arcades," he said. "Those games are computers, too. Those programs were often written by young hackers."

Phil explained how he uses Penn State's mail function to send information across the country.

"I collect interesting phone numbers and if a password comes around, I'll get in and look around. I have a sequential phone dialer, like the one in 'Wargames,' and I use it to find modem lines," said Phil. "I have friends who send random touch tones to MCI, SPRINT, etc., in order to find other people's long distance codes. Then we send the information across the country using B.B.S.s (computer bulletin board systems) or across PSU using the mail function."

Do these hackers consider their methods of unauthorized entry a crime?

"It depends what was intended," said Phil. "There is nothing wrong with getting into a mainframe's games-file and playing 'Hunt-the-Wumpus,' but if you get into the tactical air command to start a nuclear war, then you should go to jail."

And just how well do these hackers know the system here at Capitol Campus?

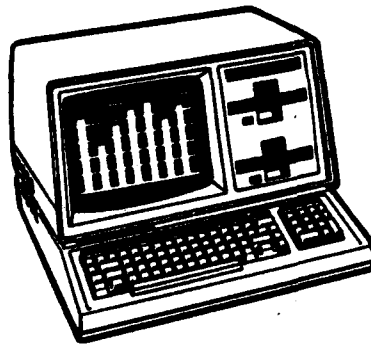
"Many of us know the system here as well as or better than the professional staff," said Andrew. "Most of us work at the center and provide assistance to the less informed.

a payroll file," said Phil. "And a friend at Lehigh left school because he got caught giving passwords (his own) to me and about twenty other people across the country."

What Andrew dislikes about the computer center here at Capitol is the reliance of first time users on the operators for help.

"It becomes difficult for well-known hackers to get any work done in the computer center, as they are constantly accosted for help by neophytes, casual users and even other hackers," said Andrew.

"It is an unfortunate fact that many of the professors here give erroneous instructions for using the system to their classes," he said. "Most of these people are using the computer for the first time and it falls on the shoulders of the operators and/or hackers to shepherd them through the many pitfalls to reasonable computer literacy."



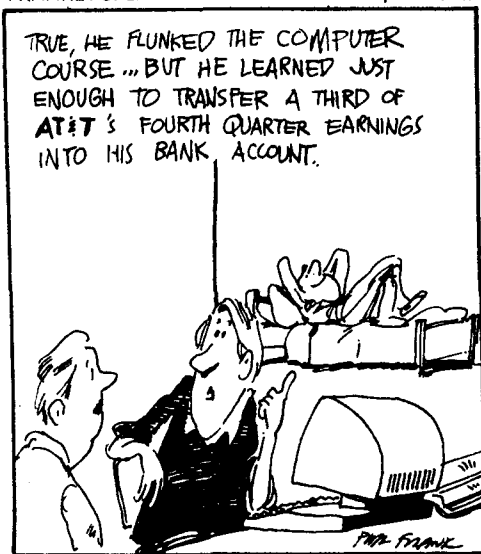
Getting caught is not part of the plan but, as Phil pointed out, it can happen.

"I almost got booted out for printing instruction manuals, so I'm not even gonna' try to break into anything," he said.

"A friend of mine almost got kicked out of Muhlenberg for being falsely accused of deleting

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'Easy Net' aids research

By Annette Childs

On April 5, 1985, the Heindel Library will begin offering students, faculty and staff a pay-as-you-go system called EasyNet.

EasyNet is a menu-driven, on-line retrieval system which gives users access to hundreds of commercially available databases in business, science, engineering, medicine, social sciences, arts and humanities, news and entertainment.

According to Mary Ann Filler, Senior Assistant Librarian at the Heindel Library, "It is a simplified method of on-line searching for end users and requires no pre-registration, password, or previous training in on-line searching—you just simply pick a topic and the computer picks the database and translates it for you."

With the introduction of EasyNet into the ODIN (Online Database Information Network) Services at Heindel Library, on-line searching has been extended to meet the research needs of faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students needing a limited number of references on a particular topic.

EasyNet, as a part of the ODIN system, will supplement

the traditional reference services of the library. On-line searching by trained library faculty will still be available to faculty for research and to graduate students for approved thesis research.

EasyNet is expected to speed the process of finding research material.

Filler stated, "The average search takes about fifteen minutes, and the only difference is that the user has to pay for the search."

The retrieval system bills you through your credit card; American Express, VISA, or Master Card. Or you can establish an account number with EasyNet.

According to Filler, "There are no requirements, anyone can receive an account number by simply applying for it."

Orientations for those interested in using EasyNet will be held Monday through Thursday, April 1-4, for two hours at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Persons who wish to attend an orientation session should see one of the reference librarians.

"The use of the EasyNet system is entirely at the discretion of the user, and the Heindel Library will not be responsible for any charges incurred," stated Filler.

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