



A Young Hacker's Tale

Nitnek Singh Sodhi is a 14-year-old certified ethical hacker, and probably the youngest to write a book on it. Dataquest brings you a sneak peek

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In an age where teenagers are still dealing with their growing anxieties and adolescent innocence, a 14-year-old school going kid from Lucknow goes on to become a certified ethical hacker! Nitnem Singh Sodhi, a 14-year old young IT expert from Lucknow (UP) India, is a certified ethical hacker and holds 2 years experience in this field.



“This book will teach you how to exploit/hack the human mind and extract any information from any person”

—Nitnem Singh Sodhi

Famous Social Engineers

Already the masters of this game are renowned social engineers today, may be not for good cause. Few to name are:

- **Kevin Mitnick**—Reformed computer criminal and later security consultant
- **Badir Brothers**—Ramy, Muzher, and Shadde Badir; all of whom were blind from birth—managed to set up an extensive phone and computer fraud scheme in Israel in the 1990s using social engineering
- **Archangel**—The white hat hacker, computer security consultant, and writer for Phrack Magazine, Archangel (nicknamed ‘The Greatest Social Engineer of All Time’) has demonstrated social engineering techniques to gain everything from passwords to pizza to automobiles to airline tickets
- **Steve Stasiukonis**—Security consultant for Secure Network Technologies. Inventor of the USB thumb drive test where USB sticks contained exploits to test if employees would run them from within their business environments
- **Mike Ridpath**—Security consultant for IOActive, published author, and speaker

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_engineering_%28security%29

Going on to become the next Aaron H Swartz, Sodhi is currently helping Lucknow Police in various cases related to hacking and cybercrime. He is now the youngest person in India to author in this field, and perhaps the youngest hacker in India. He has recently written a book ‘*Hacking the Human Mind: Social Engineering*’. Though there are numerous such books available and written by experts in the market, but a book written by a 14-year-old hacker on such a complex topic is rare.

“Social engineering is one of the oldest methods of hacking. It refers to how a person exploits or hacks the human mind and extracts information from it. This book will teach you each and every aspect of social engineering and help you master it easily.

This book will teach you how to exploit/hack the human mind and extract any information from any person. It is the one-stop guide for learning social engineering,” explains Nitnem Singh Sodhi, author of this book.

“Hacking is easy as well as complicated at the same time” says Nitnem in his introductory passage.

Social Engineering—Easy Yet Powerful Hacking Technique

He explained how social engineering is an easy yet powerful hacking technique. The process of changing your identity and tricking the victim and extracting sensitive information from the victim is the essence of social engineering and hence the technique of hacking the human mind! There are two and more

methods or means of conducting social engineering attack, ie, through calls and emails.

“The hacker can change or spoof his/her call ID/number in which the victim has his account. This secures hacker’s identity and can retrieve sensitive data from victim as required. For example, a hacker can change his call id to victim’s bank phone number and can retrieve back details from the victim superimposing as bank employee calling from bank’s official phone number.

Other major method is through emails. Hacker can send victim an email requesting to some sensitive information by simply changing his email id to the one as desired. The change in call id and email id can be done as described in the book following few simple methods.” says the book

The book also mentions how to secure yourself from social engineering attacks as victims! It urges you to know the techniques of hacking and how to prevent yourself falling for such tricks.

“Knowing the social engineering techniques, readers can develop a hacker’s mind set to implement simple hacking techniques to solve any relevant problem,” says the book.

The book goes on to explain that social engineering can be used to exploit as well as strengthen the weakness’ of human mind. Social engineering as an act of psychological manipulation had previously been associated with the social sciences, but its usage has caught on among computer professionals. Nitnem has utilized the importance of social engineering to good use for the social cause and inspires others like him to follow his footsteps. ■