



# The Hacker Diaries: Confessions of Teenage Hackers (Consumer One-Off)

*Dan Verton*

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*To many who knew him, there was nothing odd about him. He was a normal kid...*

On February 7, 2000, Yahoo.com was the first victim of the biggest distributed denial-of-service attack ever to hit the Internet. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, Buy.com was battling a massive denial-of-service attack. Later that afternoon, eBay.com also reported significant outages of service, as did Amazon.com. Then CNN's global online news operation started to grind to a crawl. By the following day, Datek and E-Trade entered crisis mode...all thanks to an ordinary fourteen-year-old kid.

Friends and neighbors were shocked to learn that the skinny, dark-haired, boy next door who loved playing basketball--almost as much as he loved computers--would cause millions of dollars worth of damage on the Internet and capture the attention of the online world--and the federal government. He was known online as "Mafiaboy" and, to the FBI, as the most notorious teenage hacker of all time. He did it all from his bedroom PC. And he's not alone.

Computer hacking and Web site defacement has become a national pastime for America's teenagers, and according to the stories you'll read about in *The Hacker Diaries*--it is only the beginning. But who exactly are these kids and what motivates a hacker to strike? Why do average teenagers get involved in hacking in the first place? This compelling and revealing book sets out to answer these questions--and some of the answers will surprise you. Through fascinating interviews with FBI agents, criminal psychologists, law-enforcement officials--as well as current and former hackers--you'll get a glimpse inside the mind of today's teenage hacker. Learn how they think, find out what it was like for them growing up, and understand the internal and external pressures that pushed them deeper and deeper into the hacker underground. Every hacker has a life and story of his or her own. One teenager's insatiable curiosity as to how the family's VCR worked was enough to trigger a career of cracking into computer systems. This is a remarkable story of technological wizardry, creativity, dedication, youthful angst, frustration and disconnection from society, boredom, anger, and jail time. Teenage hackers are not all indifferent punks. They're just like every other kid and some of them probably live in your neighborhood. They're there. All you have to do is look.

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