
A REVIEW PAPER ON HACKING'S ANCESTORS

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ABSTRACT

Hacking is now a widely studied and recognized phenomena, but it is still difficult to define and experimentally identify since it has come to refer to a broad range of material activities, some of which are incompatible. By briefly reviewing Foucault's idea of genealogy and interpreting its perspectival position via the feminist materialist concept of the situated observer, this article offers genealogy as a framework for understanding hacking. A history of hacking will be presented in four stages, using genealogy as a theoretical frame. The 'pre-history' of hacking is the initial phase, during which four fundamental hacking techniques were established. The second phase is the so-called "golden era of cracking," in which hacking becomes a self-aware identity and culture, with many people associating it with breaking into computers, even as non-cracking activities like free software develop. The growth of serious cybercrime, hacktivism, the separation of Open Source and Free Software, and hacking as a business and work ethic are all part of the third phase, which sees hacking split into a variety of new activities while old ones persist. The last phase involves widespread awareness of government-sponsored hacking, the resurgence of hardware hacking in maker labs and hack spaces, and the spread of hacking as a generalized "smart" activity. Finally, it will be argued that hacking is an interrogation of the rationality of information techno-cultures enacted by each hacker practice situating itself within a particular techno-culture and then using that techno-culture to change itself, both in terms of changing potential actions that can be taken and changing the nature of the techno-culture itself, across all of the practices surveyed.

KEYWORDS: Computer, Cyber, Genealogy, Hacking, Idea.

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