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The Computer Underground.

The beginning of the electronic communication revolution

that started with the public use of telephones to the emergence

of home computers has been accompanied by corresponding social

problems involving the activities of so-called " computer

hackers," or better referred to as the computer underground (CU).

The CU is composed of computer aficionados who stay on the

fringes of legality. The CU is composed of relatively intelligent

people, in contrast to the media's description of the ultra

intelligent and sophisticated teenage " hacker." The majority have

in common the belief that information should be free and that

they have " a right to know." They often have some amount of

dislike for the government and the industries who try to

control and commercialize information of any sort. This paper

attempts to expose what the CU truly is and dispel some of the

myths propagated by the media and other organizations. This paper

also tries to show the processes and reasons behind the

criminalization of the CU and how the CU is viewed by different

organizations, as well as some of the processes by which it came

into being. What the CU is has been addressed by the media,

criminologists, secuity firms, and the CU themselves, they all

have a different understanding or levels of comprehention, this

paper attempts to show the differences between the views as well

as attempt to correct misunderstandings that may have been

propagated by misinformed sources. The differences between the

parties of the CU such as, " hackers," " crackers," " phreaks,"

" pirates," and virus writers have rarely been recognized and some

deny that there are differences thus this paper attempts to give

a somewhat clearer view and define exactly what each party is

and does as well as how they relate to one another.