



## Computer Security - What Exactly Is It?

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Although the term 'computer security' is used a lot, the content of a computer is actually vulnerable to only a few risks unless the computer is connected to others on a network. As the use of computer networks (especially the Internet) has increased dramatically during the past few years, the term computer security is now used to describe issues referring to the networked use of computers and their resources.

The major technical areas of computer security are confidentiality, integrity and authentication/availability.

- Confidentiality, also known as secrecy or privacy, means that the information you own cannot be accessed by unauthorized parties. Breaches of confidentiality range from the embarrassing to the disastrous.
- Integrity means that your information is protected against unauthorized changes that are undetectable to authorized users. The integrity of databases and other resources are usually compromised through hacking.
- Authentication means that an user is who he claims to be.
- Availability means that the resources are accessible by authorized parties. Examples of availability attacks are the 'denial of service' attacks.

Other important things that the computer security professionals are concerned about are access control and nonrepudiation. Access control refer not only to the fact that users can only access the resources and services they are entitled to, but also to the fact that they can't be denied to access the resources they legitimately expect. Nonrepudiation means that a person who sends a message cannot deny he sent it and vice versa.

In addition to these technical aspects, the concept of computer security is very large. Computer security's roots are drawn from disciplines like ethics and risk analysis and the major topics that are concerning it are computer crime (tries to prevent, detect and remedy attacks) and identity/anonymity in cyberspace.

Although confidentiality, integrity and authenticity are the most important things when it comes to computer security in general, for everyday internet users, privacy is the most important one, because many people think that they have nothing to hide or the information they give doesn't seem sensitive when they register with an internet service/site.

But remember that, on the internet, information is very easily shared among companies and small pieces of related information from different sources can be linked together to form something alot more complex about a person. Because of this, nowadays, the ability to maintain control over what information is collected about them, who may use it and how it can be used is extremely important.

About the author:

For information and resources on network, computer security, hackers, vulnerabilities, patches, advisories, and more visit <http://www.itfreaks.com>

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