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**Software profiles hacker**  
*Technology provides real-time security*

By Ben Dobbin  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BUFFALO, N.Y. — A suspected crooked insider at a New York software company sells consumer-credit reports to identity thieves, at roughly \$30 a pop, in a high-tech scam that prosecutors say victimizes thousands of people.

An unemployed British computer administrator fights extradition to face federal charges in Virginia and New Jersey that he hacked into 92 separate U.S. military and government networks, often getting past easy-to-guess passwords to download sensitive data.

These and other recent data intrusions have given rise to a promising profiling strategy aimed at preventing online break-ins as they happen.

Just as authorities use profiling to guard against criminals at ports and borders, researchers at the State University of New York at Buffalo are developing software that can generate highly personalized profiles of network users by analyzing the sequences of commands entered at each computer terminal.

The system could provide a high-grade layer of protection for military installations and government agencies as well as banking or other commercial networks that require especially tight monitoring.

The software draws up regularly updated profiles by closely tracking over time how each person performs an array of routine tasks, such as opening files, sending e-mail or searching through digital archives.

“The ultimate goal is to detect intrusions or violations occurring on the fly.”

— Shambhu Upadhyaya  
professor, State University of New York at Buffalo

Designed to tell if someone has strayed into an unauthorized zone or is masquerading as an employee using a stolen password, the program keeps watch for even subtle deviations in a user's behavior.

Alerted to anomalies, network administrators then begin monitoring more aggressively to assess whether intrusion ferage is in progress.

“The ultimate goal is to detect intrusions or violations occurring on the fly,” said researcher Shambhu Upadhyaya, a SUNY Buffalo computer science professor. “There are times that try to do this time but the problem is it's in too many false alarms.”

Keeping false alarms manageable minimum is an extremely difficult task, said Bruce Schneier, a security and cryptography expert and author of the best-selling “Secrets & Lies: Security in a Networked World.”

“These systems live on false alarms,” said Schneier about the software. “You see a problem in facial recognition trying to catch terrorists in those trials failed miserably.”

Aided by doctoral student Ramkumar Chinchani and Kwiat of the Air Force Research Laboratory in Rome, Upadhyaya began examining in 1999 whether monitoring user commands instead of work traffic might prove faster, more effective and efficient security monitoring.

**Geologists find quake origin**

By Alicia Chang  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A powerful earthquake splits the California desert floor, killing a toddler and crumbling homes. Years later and a dozen miles away, another huge tremor on a different fault rocks the area.

Scientists now believe the two events were related — and they are beginning to understand how.

In a study published in Thursday's issue of the journal Nature, researchers say they have directly measured for the first time how strong seismic shaking can weaken an adjacent and unrelated geologic fault.

“It's a very interesting discovery,” said Christopher Scholz of the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University, who did not participate in the study. “We already know that earthquakes trigger other earthquakes on other faults. This provides some additional information that may tell us how that happens.”

The study compares two earthquakes in the Mojave Desert. The 1992 Landers quake registered a magnitude 7.3, killed one person and caused \$100 million in damage.

After the quake, geologists buried seismometers into the fault and set off explosions in holes drilled more than 100 feet down. The explosions simulated earthquake tremors.

Five years of observations of the seismicity showed that the shattered crust was slowly repairing itself.

Then in 1999, the Hector Mine quake struck. The magnitude-7.1 quake occurred on a different fault about a dozen miles from the Landers quake. Hector Mine caused little surface damage because it was in a more remote area.

But seismic measurements showed the Hector Mine quake weakened the Landers fault and disrupted its self-repair.

“We were watching the Landers fault,” said John Vidale, a geophysicist at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the study's author. “After the Hector Mine earthquake, we could actually see that the Landers fault became weaker.”

Because geologic stress can move back and forth, the researchers speculate the Landers quake probably helped to weaken the Hector Mine before it finally broke in 1999.

“It appears that one earthquake can slightly weaken the faults around it, which may make surrounding faults more likely to have their own earthquakes,” Vidale said.

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By A  
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