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Introduction to Trojan War

An information security analyst protects computer systems and networks. A computer system is made up of two parts: the hardware and software. The hardware refers to the physical parts of a computer, like the keyboard, monitor, and mouse. The software refers to the programs that people use, like Microsoft Word or a video-editing app. A network joins multiple computers together to allow them to share data. When computers share data, they communicate with each other. For example, when you send an email to a friend, a computer network sends the email from one person's inbox to the other. The network also saves the information in the email so it can be referenced later.



Information security analysts protect systems and networks from cyberattacks. A cyberattack occurs when a hacker tries to steal information or get into a computer network that he or she does not have permission to access. Hackers steal information from computer systems and use that information to commit crimes, like purchasing items using someone's credit card information.

Information security analysts make sure that information sent from one person to another cannot be stolen by hackers. For example, if you use Apple Pay TM to pay for a food delivery service, Apple TM has a protected system that stores credit card information so hackers cannot try to steal it.

The median salary for an information security analyst in 2019 was \$99,730. It is also an occupation that is high in demand. This means that more companies will be hiring information security analysts in the future. If this is a career that interests you, you will most likely need to get a bachelor's degree in a computer-related field, such as computer sciences, computer engineering, or information technology. You might also need to get a more advanced degree, like a master's degree.



Today, you will imagine that you are an information security analyst. You will learn about a type of cyberattack, called a Trojan horse attack, that information security analysts have to watch out for. This attack is named after the Trojan war, a famous war from Greek Mythology.

Follow the steps on the next page.

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Step 1: Learn About the Trojan War

Cyberattacks and Trojan Horse Symbolism

By: Aaron Bracy

Background on Trojan War

The Trojan War was a war fought between the Trojans and the Greeks. The Trojans lived in a land across the Aegean Sea from Greece, what is now modern-day Turkey. The Trojan War is frequently talked about in Greek Mythology. For example, the war is one of the settings in the famous Ancient Greek poem, *The Iliad*. While historians are not quite sure if the Trojan War occurred exactly as it is described in *The Iliad*, there is archaeological evidence showing that during the 1200s BCE, the Greeks fought a war against Troy.

The story of the Trojan War in mythology began because of a feud between a Greek king and a Trojan prince. Prince Paris of Troy kidnapped Queen Helen, the wife of a Greek King named Menelaus. Prince Paris refused to release her so the Greeks sailed to the shores of Troy to bring her back.

In *The Iliad*, the Greeks fought the Trojans for over a decade. However, they continuously failed to break through the gates and city walls that surrounded the city of Troy. Finally, Odysseus, one of the Greek leaders, devised a plan to trick the Trojans. Knowing that the horse symbolized the power of Troy, the Greeks built a wooden horse big enough for several soldiers to hide inside. They left the horse outside the gates of the city as a “gift” for the Trojans. The Greeks also left the beach outside Troy so that they couldn't be seen.

When the Trojans saw the horse, they believed that the Greeks had left it as a gift and went back to Greece. As a result, the Trojans brought the horse inside the city walls. That night, the hidden Greek soldiers emerged and opened the gates of the city to allow other Greek soldiers to enter the city. The Greek soldiers attacked and finally defeated the Trojans.



This illustration is one artist's interpretation of what the Trojan Horse looked like.

Symbolism of Trojan Horse

The Trojan Horse remains a symbol of how something can be used to defeat others through deception. The term “Trojan Horse,” or “Trojan” is used by Information Security Analysts to describe sneaky attacks on people's computers. These attacks occur when a hacker disguises a harmful computer program, called malware, as a legitimate and safe piece of information, like an email or an advertisement. When a person clicks on the email or advertisement, the malware is downloaded onto their computer. This allows the hacker to control the other person's computer.

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Here is an example:

A person might see an email titled “Stream Today’s Hottest Dance Music For Free!” on his computer. When he opens the email, he learns that the email is not actually an offer to get free music. Instead, it is a virus, or “Trojan,” that attacks the computer. In this case, the deceptive email represents the Trojan Horse. The virus represents the Greek soldiers who jump out of the Trojan Horse to attack.

Cyberattacks take many forms, including the following:

Email Attachments and Spam Messages

Hackers send emails that appear to be important or even too good to be true. Emails with subjects such as, “You’re a winner!” or “Collect Now” or “Payment” are fake. Instead, the emails are a virus waiting to be opened.



Freeware or Cracked Software

Sometimes ads or sites on the Internet offer free versions of software that normally costs money. All the viewer has to do is download the program. In actuality, these are not real software programs but just another type of malware or virus that can infect your computer.



A Trojan horse is not too hard to avoid if precautions are taken. Here are some ways to keep your computer safe:

Never download unfamiliar email attachments

If you receive a suspicious-looking attachment, don’t click on it or open it.



Avoid the Free Stuff

Hackers like to disguise trojan horses as free goodies. Be careful! If you come across a free version of an expensive software program, a new app, or a hit movie from an unknown website, don’t download it. Stick to trusted sources, like iTunesTM or AmazonTM, when downloading programs to your computer or phone. That freebie might end up costing you more than you think



Install an Antivirus Program

Antivirus programs detect and destroy malware. Installing these programs can help keep your computer safe.



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Answer the questions below based on what you read.

1. Trojan horses work on some computer users but not others. Do you agree with this claim? Back up your claim by paraphrasing at least two pieces of evidence from the passage.

2. In your opinion, are hackers who plant viruses on computers similar or different to the Greeks who planted the Trojan Horse? Explain your reasoning.

3. Directly cite one piece of information from the passage to explain a way that someone can get a computer virus.

4. A computer user notices money missing from their bank account after opening an email that had “overdue bill” in the subject line. Is this an example of a Trojan horse cyberattack? Explain your reasoning using at least one piece of evidence from the passage.

5. Imagine you were the commander of the Trojan soldiers during the war. What could you have done differently when you to ensure your troops weren’t victims of the surprise attack?

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Step 2: Sharing Your Opinions

Information security analysts educate people on how to keep their computers safe. Imagine you are an information security analyst who also hosts a popular podcast. You want to create a podcast to share with your corporation's employees and other listeners what you have learned about Trojan horses and malware.

Your podcast will consist of three questions from listeners and your answers to the questions. The questions from the listeners are written out below. Your job is to come up with a creative name for the podcast and answer the questions.

Name of Podcast: _____

Question #1: What is your opinion on people using references to mythology or stories to talk about modern issues, like cyberattacks?

Answer:

Question #2: What are some new ways that you expect hackers to use Trojan horses in the future?

Answer:

Question #3: I have children in middle school. What advice should I give them so that their devices and apps aren't victim to cyberattacks?

Answer:
