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Give up hacked

We are so pleased to announce that we have teamed up with MakerGeeks for the Hardware Hacking Contest! They offer some absolutely amazing prizes - we love them and we know you too will. Turn your DSLR into an infrared camera! Use an arduino to automate your food processor! Get creative, we want to see your wild inventions and hardware innovations! Multiple entries are accepted, but each entrant can only win one prize. The competition is open to contributions from the United States, Canada [except Quebec], United Kingdom, China, Belgium, Netherlands, Australia, Colombia, Germany, Switzerland, Norway, India, New Zealand and Denmark. Competition begins at 12:00 pm Pacific Standard Time (PT), November 4, 2013. Contest closes for entries at 11:59 PT, December 31, 2013. The winner(s) will be solely responsible for complying with all applicable statutes, laws (including, but not limited to, common law, if applicable), rules and regulations and for carrying personal income tax, VAT, withholding tax, customs duty or other taxes, fees, insurance, surcharges or other costs related to the receipt, claim or collection of a prize. Hardware Hacking is closed. Cars these days are rolling computers, with technology that controls almost every aspect of an engine's performance and capacity. Sensors track the car's health and performance, and all report back to a central computer. To monitor and adjust these systems, every car built over the past decade contains a standard port - think super-sized serial - under the hood, or behind the wheel. Using fancy diagnostic equipment, your mechanic can check out, diagnose and solve almost any problem these sensors uncover - simply by entering into the right code. All this computer equipment means it's almost impossible to mess with car engines the way we used to. But the auto industry has standardized around something called OBD II for On Board Diagnostics. OBD II dictates the way a computer speaks to the car and the plug used. Thanks to hacker trosbe believe - if you build it, we will come - today you can buy a variety of tools that help you mess with your car, at least a bit. And the good news is that they work well! I recently played around with AutoXRay, which includes a handheld scanner that connects to the OBD II port on most modern cars - and downloads data to a standard PC. It is associated nicely with my 1997 Saab 9000 and 1996 Land Rover Discovery (but alas, not with my 1992 Miata). The documentation did a bad job helping me find the ports - which on both cars were located just under the steering wheel. Once I found them, however, it was a snap to connect the special cables from the car to the scanner, and then dump the captured data into my PC. The scanner itself provided a wealth of data, including information on how the engine was running, what of the codes meant how the sensor was in operation and more. This information really came in handy when check engine lights started flashing on the Rover's dashboard. A quick scan and I found that it was nothing to worry about - and the device even reset the light. At \$699, it's not a cheap product, but the information it shows may be worth it. I'm not a car nut - which means I'm not likely to continuously monitor and adjust my vehicles. But depending on your car, if you want to ramp up performance there are a number of products out there that do more than just monitor. They will actually let you change how your car reacts, speeding you up on your way. Some will even help you replace the control chip in your car - setting limits on speed and other features. Be careful if you go this route - you will definitely invalidate the manufacturer's warranty, and could burn your engine too. Others will help you update the programmable memory that sets tolerances for most of the car's systems. If you have a turbo, you're in luck. This fast engine peripheral is mostly computer-controlled - and careful tuning can result in at least 15 more horsepower. The better software packages provided by DirectPort Programming from Audi Performance and Racing will load your car up with four different performance profiles - which you can choose using cruise control buttons! (This special package only works with Audi and Volkswagen models). The Forge-Revo performance software from Forge MotorSports loads its profiles onto a small remote control. To choose which profile you want to use, click a button at the top, and then connect it to the OBD II port. Both products include an energy saving valet/teenager fashion, an anti-theft mode and others. APEX Power FC is an interesting controller for your car. The company calls it a total engine management system and it replaces the factory engine control unit (ECU) and lets you tweak almost everything. With the optional FC Commander - a remote control for Power FC - you can adjust from the driver's seat. Remember, just as microchip overclockers risk destroying their CPU, tweaking your car is not for the faint-hearted. You can burn out your engine or other subsystems if you are not careful. Consider yourself warned, and happy driving. But don't cry me if your hot mess gets cold. Note: The download link has been temporarily removed while PC World tries to locate the vendor whose previous site has disappeared. If you love your iPod Video but feel a pang of jealousy every time you see them glam iPod Classic interface, there's an easy cure: Give your iPod an interface makeover. Thanks to a few firmware hacks, your 5G or 5.5G iPod Video can be gussy-up with Classic menus and icons. iPod Classic for iPod Video hack, for example, brings the former's split-screen interface to the latter, with menu choices on the left and a mini Player now pane on the right. It also updates main Now Plays screen to be more iPod Touch for iPod Video hack makes even more dramatic changes, with lovely a Touch-style Now Playing screen and menu icons. You don't get Cover Flow, but you get a very cool (and reversible) overhaul. Download and try the hack, and then download the free iPodWizard utility, which allows you to load third-party firmware onto your iPod. If things go wrong or you don't like the new interface, you can return to iPodWizard and click the Downgrade Firmware button to restore your iPod's original firmware. Note: This link takes you to the seller's website, where you can download the version of the software that suits your iPod.-Rick Broida Note: When you buy something after clicking on links in our articles, we can earn a small commission. Read our affiliate link policy for more details. Biscuits turn computers into zombies using small programs that exploit weaknesses in a computer's operating system (OS). You may think that these biscuits are cutting edge Internet criminal brains, but in truth, many have little to no programming experience or knowledge. (Sometimes people call these biscuit script kiddies because they are young and show no skills in writing script or code.) Investigators who monitor botnets say that the programs these biscuits use are primitive and poorly programmed. Despite the ham-handed approach, these programs do what biscuits intended them to do - converting computers into zombies. In order to infect a computer, the cracker must first get the installer to the victim. Biscuits can do this via email, peer-to-peer networks or even on a regular website. Most of the time, biscuits hide malicious program with a name and file extension, so the victim thinks he gets something completely different. As users become savvy about internet attacks, biscuits find new ways to deliver their programs. Have you ever seen a pop-up ad that included a No thanks button? Hopefully you don't click on it - these buttons are often just decoys. Instead of rejecting the annoying pop-up ad, they enable a download of malicious software. Ad When the victim receives the program, he has to activate it. In most cases, the user believes that the program is something else. It may appear to be an image file, an MPEG, or another recognizable file format. When the user chooses to run the application, nothing seems to be happening. For some people, this raises alarm bells and they immediately follow up with a flurry of viruses and spyware scanner activity. Unfortunately, some users simply think they have received a bad file and leave it at that. Meanwhile, the activated program attaches itself to an element of the user's operating system, so that every time the user turns on his computer, the program becomes active. Biscuits don't always use the same segment of an operating system's initializing sequence, making detection difficult for the average user. The programme contains either instructions to perform a task at a specific time, or it allows the cracker to directly control the user's Internet activity. Many of these programs work over an Internet Relay Chat (IRC), and in fact there is the botnet community on the IRC network where fellow biscuits can help each other out - or try to steal another cracker botnet. When a user's computer is compromised, the cracker pretty much has free control to do whatever he wants. Most biscuits try to stay under the radar of users' consciousness. If a cracker alerts a user to his presence, the cracker risks losing a bot. For some biscuits, this is not much of a problem, since some network number in hundreds of thousands of zombies. In the next section we will look at the relationship between zombie computers and spam.

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