

INSIDE THE MIND OF A HACKER

An Interview with Former Hacker Jan Saggiori

At Customer Day 2012, attendees had the unique opportunity to hear from former media pirate and hacker **Jan Saggiori**, who provided his experiences with and insight on the nefarious end of The Piracy Continuum. Jan is now a security consultant and managing director SSS LLC, a firm that provides security to pay TV operators and media companies such as Canal+, Viaccess, Nagravision, Conax and Irdeto.

Why did you engage in piracy and hacking – and what made you stop?

As a globetrotter, I wanted to open my eyes to the media worldwide but not all of it was accessible due to geographical restrictions. Studying the technology helped me to view and experience such content. Pay TV piracy actually wasn't illegal until the beginning of the century. As far as what made me stop, having achieved a high skill level and knowledge of the technology, I started to find I could consult with large pay TV operators on the security of their content and products. Through this work came the new Mediaguard v1+ from Canal+ where mostly 40% of the smart card code is based on my research.

What motivates a typical hacker?

First, there is a clear distinction to explain between Commercial Pirates and Hackers (technology pioneers) and Crackers (code breakers).

Commercial Pirates are quite simply criminals stealing your content and broadcasting it for financial gain. The motivation here is making money, and it's not much different than selling stolen goods from the back of a truck. In fact, media piracy is rising as an organized crime in many areas of the world.

Hackers, on the other hand, are more motivated to study, pioneer and build new technologies. Hackers can of course be credited with inventing GNU/Linux and are often motivated by the philosophy of "freedom of choice." The roots of this philosophy can be traced back to Richard Stallman, professor at MIT, the father of free software/GNU and an advocate for user's freedom. Stallman advocates the abolition of laws that prevent sharing and promote ownership amongst reform. There those are well received by hackers and it is the



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sharing and promotes aggressive copyright reform. These ideas are well-received by hackers and it is the general sentiment behind practices such as: rooting and jailbreaking (which removes constraints that tie viewing devices to a single service provider or limit the content sources they can access, for example).

A Commercial Pirate cannot be called a Hacker or a Cracker, as both of these characters have no commercial interest and they are not copying content. They are simply exploring and pioneering the technology helping to develop it further.

What advice do you have for pay TV operators trying to manage piracy?

Pay TV operators need to keep four very important things in mind as they work to meet consumer demand, secure their assets, protect the future of their business models and mitigate piracy:

1. Technology is an asset, but only if it meets a consumer's needs.
2. Technology *must not* be a prison for the end user.
3. Piracy needs to be watched and studied as much as it needs to be stopped – it could provide very critical business insights into consumer needs for next five to 10 years.
4. Marketing is actually an important tool in fighting piracy.

Today, piracy is often a result of a missing (or bad) service proposed by the operator. Better protection technology that secures more high-demand content, better subscription packages, more flexibility and a better user experience are the tools you need to fight piracy.

The Piracy Continuum™



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Technology helping to usher in future.

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