

A brief history

The Computer Misuse Act 1990 was introduced into UK Law after two hackers obtained, without the persons knowledge, the username and password of an I.T. engineer who worked for a large telephone communications company.

The two hackers then remotely logged into the I.T. engineers' account and to their surprise they were able to access the mailbox of Prince Phillip! The police were notified and the hackers were arrested. The two hackers were convicted under the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981. The hackers claimed that their actions were not for financial gain, but they had simply wanted to demonstrate that they could hack the system.

On appeal, their convictions were overturned as it could not be said that they had committed forgery under the legislation. The Computer Misuse Act 1990 was created to deal with the issue of accessing or modifying data without permission.

HACKING IT LEGAL



THE COMPUTER MISUSE ACT 1990

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The Computer Misuse Act 1990

Section 1

Unauthorised access to computer material.

- You watch your friend enter their username and password. You remember their login details and without their permission, later login and read all their messages.

Section 2

Unauthorised access with intent to commit or facilitate commission of further offences.

- Your friend leaves their tablet on the sofa. Without their permission, you access their gaming account and buy game credits with the attached credit card.

Section 3

Unauthorised acts with intent to impair, or with recklessness as to impairing, operation of computer.

- You are playing an online game with a friend who scores higher than you. You use a 'Booter' tool knowing it will knock them offline, so you can win the game.

Section 3ZA

Unauthorised acts causing, or creating risk of, serious damage.

- You hack into a police network. This results in delays to emergency calls and even though it was not your intention, you were reckless in your actions.

Section 3A

Making, supplying or obtaining articles for use in offence under section 1, 3 or 3ZA.

- You download software so you can bypass login credentials and hack into your friend's laptop, however you've not had a chance to use it yet.

