

## Ten Spy-Busting Secrets

### (The Top 10 Spy-Busting Tips The Snoops Don't Want You To Know)

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#### **Who are these snoops?**

Competitors, vendors, investigators, business intelligence consultants, colleagues vying for positions, overbearing bosses, suspicious partners, the press, labor negotiators, government agencies. The list is long.

#### **Why would I be a target?**

Money and Power are the top two reasons behind illegal surveillance. If anything you say or write could increase someone else's wealth or influence, you are a target.

#### **Is snooping common?**

Yes. The news is full of stories about stolen information. In fact, many news stories themselves begin with leaks.

#### **Can I protect myself?**

Yes. Espionage is preventable. If you know the vulnerabilities, you can take the proper security precautions. Some spy tricks are obvious, if you stop to think about it. Some are clever abuses of the new technology we live with every day. All are devastating. Time has shown that many of the same tricks are used successfully over and over again. We present the top ten. Prepare to fight back.

#### **#1 - Trash Trawling**

Dumpster diving, waste archeology, or trashing, all refer to rifling garbage in an effort to cull valuable information. This is believed to be the number one method of business and personal espionage.

Surprise. In and of itself, stealing garbage is legal. On May 17, 1988 the U. S. Supreme Court confirmed that there is no expectation of privacy, or ownership, once an item is left for garbage pickup. Scraps of seemingly useless information are synergistically related. The counterespionage process is one of reducing the availability of these puzzle parts. Shredding all waste paper is a major step in the protection process.

#### ***Recommendations & Tips***

- Encourage the destruction of all waste paper.
- Purchase shredders appropriate for your needs.
- Use crosscut destruction for high levels of security.
- Computer paperwork and large volume waste require a central bulk shredder.

- Snoops love it when you save confidential papers in a cardboard box under the desk. Shred it now.
- Do not entrust wastepaper destruction to paper recycling vendors. Destroy it before recycling.
- Don't forget: you also need shredders next to copiers and in the executives' home offices.
- The big shredder purchasing mistake... Buying just one large shredder for everyone to use. Reason: Not everyone will use it. Why? Some people are too busy to be bothered. The better choice is several convenient desk-side shredders. This is one perk / status symbol which has a very positive payback. Bonus... Some companies promote their use of shredders for protecting their clients' privacy. A service not offered by competitors.

## #2 - Bugs & Wiretaps

Although most snooping involves other methods listed in this briefing, electronic surveillance is the most devastating spy trick there is. Very private - and irrefutable - secrets are the target of this attack.

Common mistake... Saying, "Oh, I'm just being paranoid," when you suspect electronic surveillance. Think... You wouldn't be suspicious if everything were fine. Something is wrong.

### *Course of Action...*

- Do not discuss your suspicions with others unless they have a real need to know.
- Do not discuss suspicions in suspected areas.
- Do not attempt a do-it-yourself solution.
- Do not waste money buying spybuster toys.
- Seek professional guidance without delay. Contrary to what you see on television, in the movies, or in catalogs, detection of bugs and wiretaps is equipment and knowledge intensive work. Expect a professional sweep team to have about \$100,000 dollars invested in their instrumentation. Their personnel will have deep experience in security, investigations, electronics and telecommunications.

Hint: Don't bother to check the yellow pages. Contact a corporate security director or professional security organization for a knowledgeable recommendation. It's worth the effort. We hope you will consider Murray Associates services too.

## #3 -The Drop By Spies

Check - and photocopy - the credentials and work orders of anyone performing technical work in or around your offices. Double check. Verify the work was actually requested and necessary. This includes:

- telecommunications technicians
- computer technicians

- office equipment repair persons
- paper recyclers
- cleaning crews
- electricians
- et cetera

Have someone representing your interests accompany these visitors while on your property. If possible, have them complete their work during normal business hours. Outside contractors and unauthorized company employees should never be allowed to roam unescorted within areas containing sensitive information.

One professional snoop brags openly that any building can be entered at any time, simply by posing as the air conditioning / heating guy. His props include a clipboard with forms and an industrial thermometer. Optional: a 2-way radio and a hard hat. If challenged, he threatens not to come back for three weeks. Busy schedule, you know. No one wants responsibility for denying this guy entry.

#### ***Other tips...***

- Check your locks and alarm system regularly. Make sure each component really works. It is surprising how many effective-looking broken locks and alarm sensors are relied upon for protection.
- If key control has long since gone out of control, tackle the problem now. Change locks and set up a system which will work. Consider card key access.
- When seeking assistance with security matters, be sure to hire consultants who don't also sell products, and who will not accept remuneration from companies they recommend.

#### **#4 - Hacking & Cracking**

Espionage aimed specifically at personal computers, laptop computers, networks and remote access ports is rampant. Explain to everyone who keeps sensitive data in their computers why security precautions are necessary.

Example: The protect your laptop at all times rule. Replacement cost is not your only loss, consider the...

- valuable competitive and confidential data
- time it took for someone to compile the data
- time it will take to reconstruct the data
- company's modem telephone numbers, and mainframe passwords are probably stored on the drive.

When this information is lost, the company is vulnerable to...

- wholesale theft / corruption of mainframe data
- and sabotage via viruses, Trojan horses, etc.

Bottom line:

- Lower profitability.
- Reduced job security for everyone.

### *More computer security tips...*

- Develop a communal sense of security responsibility.
- Limit physical access to computers by outsiders.
- Limit software access. Use quality passwords.
- Secure PC related materials; disks, backups, etc.
- Never leave an active terminal. Always log-off.
- Report suspected intrusions and altered data.
- Remove sensitive data from the PC when not in use.
- Protect memory media: floppies and optical disks.
- Copy commands can move sensitive data inadvertently.
- Do not rely on deletion commands. Format instead.
- Erase disks before disposal, or transfer to other use.
- Disconnect PCs from networks when not in use.
- Computers using phone lines need access protection.
- Do not use unsolicited or borrowed software.
- Backup all data on a regular basis.
- Reformat hard drives before retiring old computers.
- Do not discuss system security with anyone you don't know - no matter what they tell you.

Q. What is the first rule of espionage?

A. There are no rules. If you have what they want, they will use any means to get it. - M. Russell

### **#5 - Mobile Phone Leeches**

Cellular and cordless telephones are among the easiest of eavesdropping targets. Contrary to common perception, reception of these conversations is generally crystal clear, without static or interference. Each and every word can be understood. Use them with discretion. Cellular radio-telephone communications can be received by the general public over hundreds of square miles. In addition to being an espionage windfall, monitoring of these transmissions has also become a national pastime with opportunistic hobbyists selling their "finds" as well.

Monitoring of cellular and cordless telephone transmissions is illegal. Do not rely on the laws to protect your privacy, though. They are generally considered unenforceable. New techniques in cellular eavesdropping include computer assisted, totally automated monitoring. This allows monitoring of specific phones, 24-hours a day, from cell to cell, without human assistance. To protect car telephone conversations...

- Arrange to call in on a number which is not answered with a company name or other identifying information.
- Use first names and code words to identify special projects.
- Speak in general and uninteresting terms.

Home cordless telephones can be received up to one mile away. Use them only as an answering convenience. Switch to your regular telephone for increased - not absolute - security.

If you must have a cordless phone, buy one which operates in the 900 MHz frequency range using digital spread spectrum technology.

- Other telephones which can be monitored include:
  - Commercial airline and rail telephones.
  - Ocean liner phone calls.
  - Long distance calls sent via satellite.
  - Long distance calls sent via microwave radio links.

## #6 - Technology Traitors

Technological advancements give us many communications conveniences. Portable telephones, for example. Unfortunately, they also bring new opportunities for the snoops. Here are a few vulnerabilities you need to know about...

- **Answering Machines.** Messages left on many home units can be remotely accessed using a simple two or three digit code. Easy to hack. Most people never change the code which comes preset in new machines. Some units also have a remote listen-in feature. Read your manual carefully.
- **Voice Mail.** The business version of an answering machine can also be monitored. Use the longest password possible. Change it often.
- **Baby Monitors.** In reality, very sensitive room bugs which transmit 24-hours a day. Monitored by passing burglars to see if the house is empty, and by nosy neighbors. Use monitors sparingly. Plug the transmitter into a light timer. Keep baby's door closed.
- **Fax Machines I.** Some fax machines use disposable rolls of black film in their printing process. Used rolls contain an exact copy of all faxes received.
- **Fax Machines II.** Receiving an after hours fax transmission is similar to receiving mail without an envelope. Sensitive messages are routinely read by bored guards and workers roaming around the building burning up their overtime. Use a fax vault.
- **Cordless Microphones.** Presenters at meetings love using them. Unfortunately, they transmit crystal clear audio about a quarter mile. Ban them from any meeting to which the general public would not be invited.
- **Dictation Machines.** You may shred the rough drafts, lock up the file copies, and send the originals in security sealed envelopes... but the dictation tape sits on the secretary's desk waiting to be swapped.

## #7 - Meeting Chameleons

Off-site meetings, conventions, trade shows, seminars, etc. present the snoop with excellent opportunities for infiltration and information collection. Alert your people to the problems. A simple briefing should include the following advisories...

- Off-site meetings are prime targets for snoops.
- Spy methods used may be unethical or illegal.
- Security will control meeting room access (24 hours).
- Electronic eavesdropping detection will be employed.
- Attendees must wear ID badges at all times.
- Never leave your laptop or briefcase unattended.
- Leave written proprietary information with security.
- Proprietary data should remain in the secured area.
- Do not discuss business in public areas.
- Be suspicious of strangers who befriend you.
- Report suspicious activity to security immediately.
- Define Proprietary Information for your employees. It is information which is not general knowledge and is related to the company's products, methods, customers, plans, etc. It is any information which would cause the loss of profit, or a competitive advantage, if it fell into the wrong hands.

## #8 - The Silver Platter

Sometimes we just give information away. How many of the following items apply to someone you know?

- Unlocked offices, desks and file cabinets.
- Confidential paperwork left out overnight.
- Posted, shared or simpleton passwords.
- Phone directories which list everything but salary.
- Credit card, Social Security, and unlisted phone numbers posted in Rolodex files left on desktops.
- Answering probing questions over the phone from people they don't really know.
- Sensitive topics discussed with known gossips.
- etc., etc., etc.

The list gets longer the more you think about it. Solution: Think about it, the list will shorten.

## #9 - Business Phone Attacks

Feature-rich business phones provide snoops with a variety of powerful eavesdropping options. The phones themselves provide: electrical power; built-in microphones and speakers which can serve dual purposes; and ample hiding space for bugs and taps.

## Telephone security checklist...

- Provide high-level security for telephone rooms.
- Restrict direct dialing into the main telephone switch.

Some dangers of unauthorized phone system access include:

- Complete deprogramming of the switch.
- Secret reprogramming to allow access to...
  - free calls,
  - voice mail,
  - executive override features (which allow forced access to busy extensions),
  - bridge tap creation (allows silent monitoring from other extensions),
  - hands-free intercom (allows room monitoring from other phones),
  - and monitoring of the station message detail recording which maintains a record of all phone calls.
- Recommendation: Replace the regular dial-up modem - which connects the switch to the outside line - with a call back type modem. With this configuration, PBX connections are limited to authorized phone numbers.
- Secure the on-site programming terminals.
- Be sure the System Administrator is trustworthy.
- Conduct periodic inspections for wiretaps.
- Conduct surprise audits of the software settings.
- Remove all unused wiring from sensitive areas.
- Make sure that voice mail and switch access passwords are high quality.
- Ask phone system users to report all suspicious calls and voice mail aberrations to the security department immediately. In addition to snooping, these may also be indications of hackers trying to enter to steal services.

## #10 - Treason

Another type of spy - the trusted employee - is one of the most dangerous and hardest to spot. The most likely candidates are employees who may...

- Be disgruntled, possibly related to insufficient raises, promotions, etc.
- Have incurred large debts due to gambling habits, unavoidable personal circumstances, or drug use.
- Be involved with labor / management issues.
- Have entrepreneurial personalities.

### *Protection tips...*

- Inspect for eavesdropping devices. These people have the time and opportunity to place and monitor.
- Selectively drop false bits of information and watch to see where they surface.

- Conduct background checks on all new employees and periodic checks on anyone with access to sensitive information.
- Check previous employment carefully.
- Uncover periods of employment not mentioned.
- Verify periods of unemployment.
- Living beyond their means may indicate extra income paid by the recipient of your business secrets.

### ***The good news...***

Espionage is preventable, and knowing a snoop's tactics is the first step toward obtaining protection. You now have enough knowledge to begin that process confidently.

### **What does a spy look like?**

There is no exact answer, but a composite picture was developed by the Business Espionage Controls and Countermeasures Association...

- 21-35 years old. Female as often as male.
- College graduate with a low-value degree.
- Broad, short-term employment background.
- Money problems - low pay, poor self management.
- Military intelligence experience.
- Acquaintances with law enforcement backgrounds.
- Considered an outsider or loner.
- Disability precluding a law enforcement career.
- No police record prohibiting sensitive employment.
- Has driver's license, possibly a poor driving record.
- Romantic hobby/interest. (Writer, photographer, sky diver, scuba, etc.)
- Collects underground & paramilitary literature.
- An active interest in firearms, often with training.
- Recruited from a want ad for Investigative Trainee.
- Often just a drone of a professional handler.
- Abilities in music, chess, math, etc. - skills associated with code breaking and espionage.

Keep this list in mind, but remember... Your snoop could be anybody.

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### ***About the author...***

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