Social Engineering



## Social Engineering

How Crowdmasters, Phreaks, Hackers, and Trolls Created a New Form of Manipulative Communication

Robert W. Gehl and Sean T. Lawson

The MIT Press

Cambridge, Massachusetts | London, England

## © 2022 Robert W. Gehl and Sean T. Lawson

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher.

The MIT Press would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers who provided comments on drafts of this book. The generous work of academic experts is essential for establishing the authority and quality of our publications. We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of these otherwise uncredited readers.

This book was set in ITC Stone Serif Std and ITC Stone Sans Std by New Best-set Typesetters Ltd.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Gehl, Robert W., author. | Lawson, Sean T., 1977-author.

Title: Social engineering: how crowdmasters, phreaks, hackers, and trolls created a new form of manipulative communication / Robert W. Gehl and Sean T. Lawson.

Description: Cambridge : The MIT Press, 2022. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

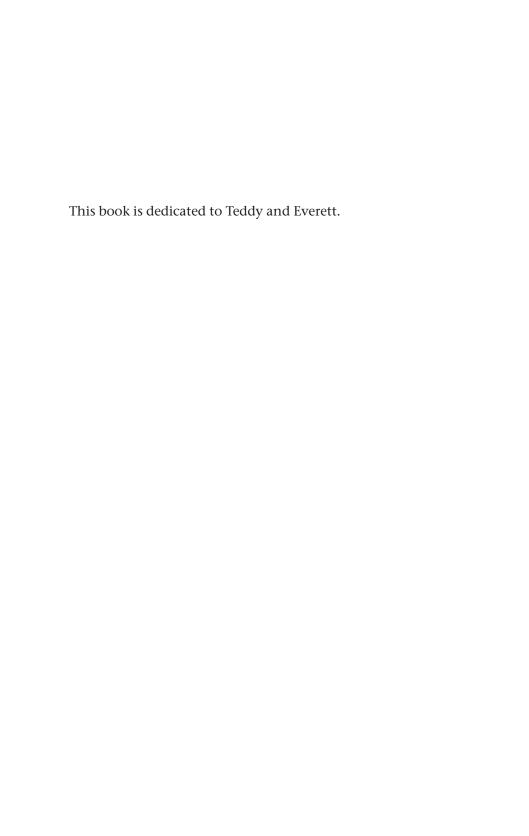
Identifiers: LCCN 2021016750 | ISBN 9780262543453 (paperback)

Subjects: LCSH: Social media—Security measures. | Computer networks—Security measures. | Internet fraud. | Social engineering.

Classification: LCC HM742 .G45 2022 | DDC 364.16/3—dc23

LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021016750

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1





## Contents

Acknowledgments

**Engineering** 1

I	<b>Engineering the Social</b> 25
1	Crowdmasters: The Rise and Fall of Mass Social Engineering,
	<b>1920–1976</b> 27
2	Phreaks and Hackers: The Rise of Interpersonal Social
	Engineering, 1976–Present 49
II	The Social Engineering Process 67
3	Trashing: From Dumpster Diving to Data Dumps 69
4	Pretexting: Recognizing the Mitnick Mythology 89
5	<b>Bullshitting: Deception, Friendliness, and Accuracy</b> 115
6	<b>Penetrating: The Desire to Control Media and Minds</b> 139
Ш	Masspersonal Social Engineering 163
7	<b>Contemporary Masspersonal Social Engineering</b> 165

Introduction: The Emergence of Masspersonal Social

## 8 Conclusion: Ameliorating Masspersonal Social Engineering 199

Notes 227 Bibliography 279 Index 319