

Tracking Website Defacement: A study of Motivational and Structural Factors

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Website defacement is the replacement of a website's original content with the attacker's own content, often with a provocative message. Unlike typical hacking where the attackers hide their illegitimate activities to avoid detection, website defacers commonly announce their successes on social media and Internet forums. One of the websites on which web defacers where the post their successes is zone-h. The information posted on this website provides researchers with a unique opportunity to gather information about illegal activities and some information about the hackers and their social media presence. The research presented here examines results of our examination of the prevalence and changes in website defacement among a select sample of hackers over time. We correlate the volume of defacements with various measures of structure and motivation. The implications for the study of hacking and policy are discussed.