

Letterpress Revival

Introduction

Though it will never regain its prominent place in the printing world versus competitors like offset lithographic presses and production digital printing systems, letterpress printing is making a remarkable comeback. This comeback is not exclusively reserved for printing museums, though it is happening there too. New initiatives at colleges and universities are riding the letterpress wave. In addition, letterpress has strong support from many artists and designers who take advantage of the technology's unique qualities.

What can we learn from letterpress?

Writing on letterpress for the Daily Heller (see bit.ly/daily-Heller), author Steven Heller notes, "For a designer, learning to set metal and wood type is as essential as learning to drive a car..." In the same article, Dikko Faust, co-founder (with Esther K. Smith) of Purgatory Pie Press, praises letterpress because it is "dimensional, textural, direct-relief printing from modular pieces: letters, borders and ornaments, as well as woodcuts, photo engravings (polymer plates) and found objects." Faust, who offers a hands-on printing class at the SVA NYC Letterpress studio, states, "Letterpress is great research and development for any design problem. Change the color, change the paper (or cloth, sheet metal, thin wood, even plastic). Change the angle. Insert ornaments. Add words of different typefaces on the press bed. Add background textures, superimpose type for vibration/emphasis."

This type of reasoning has inspired many colleges and universities to offer letterpress printing in one way or another.

Letterpress at the Rochester Institute of Technology

In a recent article entitled *Maker Community Fills the New SHED* (see bit.ly/NewSHED), Susan Gawlowicz of the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) interviewed Leah Rosen, a fourth-year RIT student pursuing a dual degree in industrial design and psychology. Rosen says that the hands-on process of letterpress printing helps ground her and inspires her to think in an analog fashion in this digital era of ours. The Cary Pressroom for letterpress printing is one of seven "makerspaces" in RIT's Student Hall for Exploration and Development (also known as SHED). Other SHED makerspaces are targeted at wood and metalworking, 3D printing, laser cutting, electronics and textiles.

"There is such attention to detail and physicality to letterpress—or any hands-on making where there is a part of you in it," Rosen said. "That's what drew me to letterpress—it's a deliberate and careful process. Then, there's this beautiful intersection between design and this incredible technology that is hundreds of years old and combines with the written word."

It is worth noting that RIT's SHED offers more than 200,000 square feet of renovated and new construction on campus. It is the size of a city block and represents RIT's largest capital project in 55 years... and letterpress is an important part of it!

Letterpress at other universities

Many universities offer letterpress as part of their curriculums. Here are a few examples:

- **Huskiana Press:** Huskiana Press at Northeastern University in Boston is an experiential letterpress studio for students, faculty and community members. Founded in 2019, it serves as a joint project of Northeastern's English and History departments. The equipment that the Huskiana Press uses was gathered and refurbished by volunteers at the Museum of Printing in Haverhill, Massachusetts.



Photo Credit: Traci Westcott, RIT

Figure 1: RIT student Leah Rosen sets type by hand and prints her own designs on vintage presses in the SHED's Cary Pressroom

- **Skeuomorph Press & BookLab:** Skeuomorph Press & BookLab at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is an experiential studio for teaching and researching the history and art of the book. Housed in the Champaign-Urbana Community FabLab, it is sponsored by the School of Information Sciences, with support from the Department of English. Its director is Ryan Cordell, who founded the Huskiana Press at Northeastern.
- **Tufts University Special Collections:** A new letterpress initiative recently kicked off at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts (near Boston). Part of Tufts' Tisch Library Special Collections, the use of letterpress highlights the university's kinship with rare texts in its collection going back to the 15th Century. Special Collections Director Chris Barbour notes that composing type for letterpress printing offers insights into how books were made over the centuries and that process can inspire students through experiential learning. Barbour quoted woodworker Doug Stowe: "Without the opportunity to learn through the hands, the world remains abstract, and distant, and the passions for learning will not be engaged."

The bottom line

The collegiate programs described here only just scratch the surface of the letterpress revival. If you look around, you'll see young artists and designers taking advantage of an old and proven technology. Quite a few of these initiatives gain support in one fashion or another from institutions like the Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum (Two Rivers, Wisconsin), Hatch Show Print (Nashville, Tennessee), the International Printing Museum (Carson, California) and the Museum of Printing (Haverhill, Massachusetts). All of these sites are working to keep the craft of analog printing alive and vital.

Source: Jim Hamilton, Green Harbor Publications, www.greenharbor.com.

RISK MANAGEMENT

AI-Driven Password Cracking: The New Frontier of Cyber Threats



Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized various aspects of our lives, from personal assistants to advanced analytics. However, not all AI advancements have been beneficial. Recently, AI cracking passcodes has been making headlines, posing a significant threat to organizations worldwide. This article explores the dangers of AI-driven password cracking, references insights from our partners and offers actionable steps to safeguard your organization.

The rise of AI-driven password cracking

As AI becomes more advanced, it's essential to consider all the ways AI can be used maliciously by cybercriminals, especially when it comes to cracking passwords. While AI password-cracking techniques aren't new, they're becoming more sophisticated and posing a serious threat to your sensitive data. Here's how it works:

- **Pattern recognition:** AI can analyze common password patterns and predict passwords based on user behavior.
- **Speed and efficiency:** AI can process vast amounts of data quickly, testing millions of password combinations in a short time.
- **Adaptive learning:** Machine learning models improve over time, becoming more effective at predicting passwords based on previous successes.

This technological leap has made even the most complex passwords vulnerable, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced security measures.

How cybercriminals use AI to crack passwords

Cybercriminals are using AI to crack passwords by leveraging them for various types of attacks, including acoustic side-channel, brute force and dictionary attacks.

- **Acoustic side-channel attack:** Cybercriminals use AI to analyze the distinct sound patterns produced by keyboard keystrokes. Each key on a keyboard emits a slightly different sound when pressed, which can be captured and analyzed to determine the

characters being typed. AI algorithms process these sound patterns to determine the password being entered and use it to compromise an account.

- **Brute force attack:** In a brute force attack, AI automates the guessing of various password combinations until the correct password is found. This method is particularly effective against weak or short passwords. With AI, cybercriminals can quickly cycle through an immense number of password combinations, dramatically increasing the speed at which they crack passwords.
- **Dictionary attack:** In a dictionary attack, AI automates the testing of a large list of common words and phrases often used as passwords. These lists can include words from dictionaries, leaked password databases and even terms specific to a target's interests.

Protecting your organization: Key strategies

As AI-driven password cracking becomes more prevalent, organizations must adopt robust security measures to protect sensitive data and systems. Here are some essential strategies to consider:

1. **Implement Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):** MFA adds an extra layer of security by requiring users to provide two or more verification factors. This could include something they know (password), something they have (smartphone) or something they are (biometric verification).
2. **Use strong, unique passwords:** Encourage employees to create strong passwords that include a mix of upper and lower case letters, numbers and special characters. Avoid using common words or easily guessable information.
3. **Regularly update passwords:** Set policies for regular password updates. While this may seem cumbersome, it significantly reduces the risk of long-term password exposure.
4. **Employ password managers:** Password managers like Keeper Security can generate and store complex passwords, reducing the reliance on human memory and minimizing the risk of weak passwords. Keeper auto-generates strong and unique passwords for each website, application and system you use – then it securely autofills your login credentials so that you don't have to worry about remembering complex passwords.
5. **Monitor for unusual activity:** Implement advanced monitoring tools to detect unusual login attempts or access patterns. AI can be leveraged for good here, identifying potential breaches before they escalate.
6. **Educate employees:** Conduct regular cybersecurity training sessions to ensure employees understand the importance of password security and the latest threats posed by AI-driven attacks.
7. **Implement account lockout mechanisms:** After a certain number of failed login attempts, accounts should be temporarily locked. This prevents AI from making endless attempts to crack passwords.

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On Our Radar

Proposed regulations and other issues that we're following:

- **Job-protected leave for crime victims** – AB 2499, which, if passed, will expand uncapped job-protected leave for an employee who is a crime victim or has a family member who is a crime victim, has been amended. The revised bill would apply to employers with 25 or more employees (not just five) and in a narrower range of situations.

Approved regulations and other issues that we've been following:

- **Cal/OSHA adopts Indoor Heat Illness prevention regulation** – The new standard will apply to all indoor work areas within the employer's control in which the temperature equals or exceeds 82 degrees Fahrenheit when employees are present. For more information, see the article at bit.ly/OSHA-heat-reg.
- **IRS issues FAQs on Educational Assistance Programs** – You can review the fact sheet at bit.ly/IRS-faqs.
- **Recordability of musculoskeletal treatments in OSHA log** – Recent OSHA guidance clarifies that musculoskeletal injuries that are treated via first aid, Active Release Technique (massage that targets soft tissues), and/or exercise and stretching generally do not need to be recorded in the OSHA log. The exceptions are if (a) the injury meets other reporting requirements or (b) the exercise or stretching is designed and administered to treat a particular work-related injury as part of a treatment plan.



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RISK MANAGEMENT

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What to look out for

Staying vigilant is key to protecting your organization. Here are some warning signs and best practices to keep in mind:

- **Phishing attempts:** AI can be used to craft convincing phishing emails. Educate employees on how to recognize and report phishing attempts.
- **Unauthorized access:** Be alert to any unauthorized access attempts. Implement strict access controls and regularly review access logs.
- **Regular security audits:** Conduct regular security audits to identify and address vulnerabilities in your systems and processes.
- **Patch management:** Ensure all software is up-to-date with the latest security patches. Vulnerabilities in outdated software can be exploited by attackers.

The broader implications for business

The rise of AI-driven password cracking is a sobering reminder of the evolving cybersecurity landscape. Businesses must stay ahead of these threats by adopting proactive measures and fostering a culture of security awareness.

Source: *Shield IT Networks, www.shielditnetworks.com*

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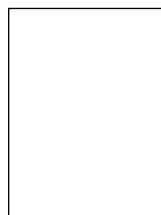
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