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Web Roundup: A Hack By Any Other Name

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Hacking has been on our minds for months now, namely due to the American (and now French) presidential election. But hacking has been of interest to scholars for decades, and in many iterations. Hacking has been analyzed as [a craft](#), [an aesthetic](#), [a historical practice](#), [a subculture](#), [a form of activism](#), [a mode of resistance](#), and more. Scholars such as [Gabriella Coleman](#) have made it their life's work to study hacking. Hacking has inspired powerful works of [fiction](#) and [art](#). But here we are: hacking in public discourse is largely distilled down into its relationship to the 2016 presidential election (perhaps aside from the large-scale [Wannacry hack](#) this month). But there is so much more to hacking, broadly and at this moment in time. Hacking is polysemic, as evidenced by what follows here this month.

What do you think of when you think of a hacker? Probably not one Liverpool billboard that was changed by hackers this week to say, "[we suggest you improve your security.](#)" Hackers, in some regard, are a helping profession. Over at The Conversation, [you can read about how ethical hacking may help point out otherwise unknown system vulnerabilities](#). Maybe, as Motherboard suggests, [young women who hack will shape the world. Hacking can also be legitimized by those in power. Noted in a piece about piracy and the pirate at The American Interest](#), hackers can have both criminal and political motives. This isn't new: hackers have been political for as long as there's been hacking. But it continues to be worth asking: Are they still hackers if they are supported and deployed by the state? Or, maybe, when does a hacker simply become a bug chaser?

Living with the Internet of Things also means that (most) things may also get hacked. What is the Internet of Things? It is partially self explanatory: things now joined with the internet are animated and made lively by their connectivity to the web and to us. It is also, say, a kind of material culture enabled, perpetuated, and created by computing. At Forbes, [Stuart Madnick argues that the Internet of Things has made us vulnerable from nearly every which way](#), and so what is required is a broad cultural adjustment. Similarly, [Keith Waddell argues at The Atlantic that the Internet of Things requires its own code of ethics](#). This month, we saw hacks on [robots \(remotely\)](#), [a soup can](#), [Chipotle](#), [a teddy bear](#),

[pacemakers](#), and [even a toy doll \(to rob you, of course\)](#).

[Marketers want to hack our unconscious](#). What's next? [We can hack our brains](#). [We can hack our biology](#). [We can hack the Anthropocene](#). What does it mean, today, to hack? What does it mean to be a hack? To do a hack? These are all questions worthy of examination. In an age of increased (in)security and surveillance, both the meaning and reach of hacking continues to expand. These breaches of literal and figurative boundaries stretch the bounds of the imagination and our understanding of the world around us. What will be hacked next? Perhaps it must be our tools for inquiry.

More links of interest:

[The history of the quantified self](#) – Cyborgology

[“An Interview with Patricia Leavy about Research Design in Contemporary Times”](#) – The Sociological Imagination

[“Twitter and Tear Gas: How Social Media Changed Protest Forever”](#)
[Excerpt] – Wired

[“Designers on Acid: The tripping Californians who paved the way to our touchscreen world”](#) – The Guardian

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