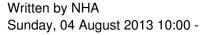
Myth busting -machines reading our minds



Neurohacking and personal security

Aug 2013

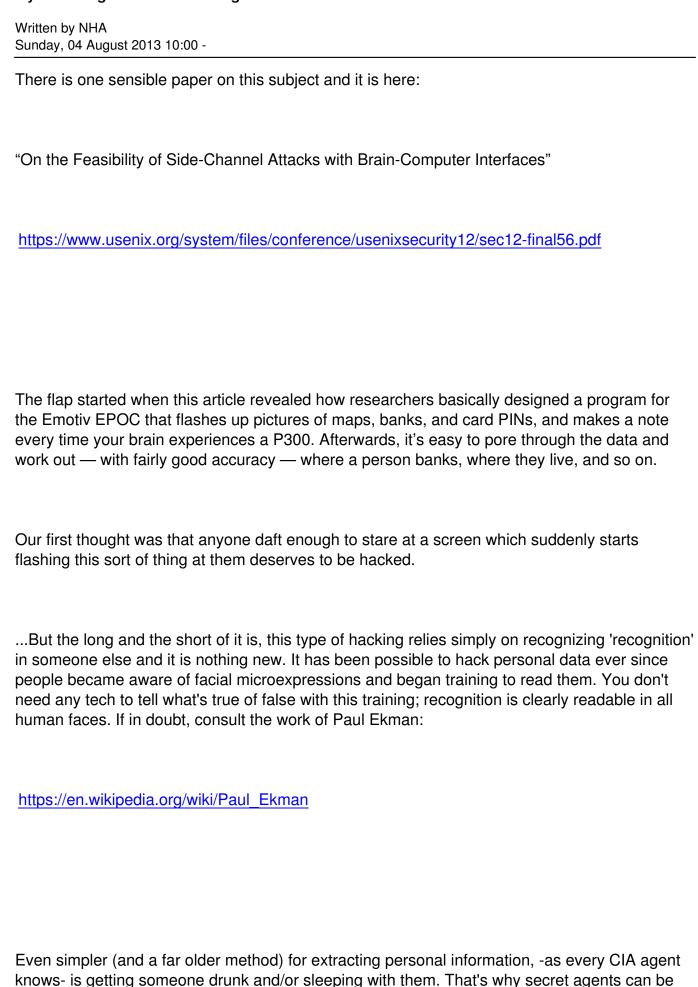
There's a wave of societal panic going around again about neurohackers back-dooring mind games to extract personal information from the user.

The fear is that simple low-cost devices now available, such as the Emotiv, Neurosky or even ThoughtStream, chart our unconscious responses to questions and reveal unconscious recognition.

For example, if we wired you up and showed you a series of numbers while asking 'which of these is the first digit of your birthdate' or 'which is the first digit of your pin #?', we would be able to tell by your response which digit was correct. We're looking for the 'P300'; a clear signal of recognition in an EEG readout.

By such methods, the anxious imply, we could all be unknowingly hacked into revealing our personal data via the internet and a BCI. "Hackers backdoor the human brain, successfully extract sensitive data" -claimed ExtremeTech's site last August, and we felt it was only a matter of time before this hit national headlines. But then a year went by...and we don't see any mad scramble to ban these devices or install legislation about their use because in reality they represent no more threat of revelation than an ordinary GSR and a lot less threat than someone watching your face through a webcam, especially if you're drunk.

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Written by NHA Sunday, 04 August 2013 10:00 -

real tarts. That extra boost of norepinephrine/oxytocin makes us all feel so confident, trusting and safe, we happily blab our most private details in this state of mind, and if we think about it many of us will have partners, family or friends who already know our birthdates, bank details and passwords.

In real life, however, we don't get interrogated by strangers online using BCI devices, and would get extremely suspicious if any game started asking us questions of the personal data type. If you're paranoid about the possibility, simply don't use a BCI with an online machine to play your games, but bear in mind you're much more vulnerable when you're drunk and someone is talking to you while watching your face.

...And finally, a tip for any wannabee journalists writing about those who would want to extract such details via mindtech or any other means -these people are not called 'Neurohackers'. These people are called 'Assholes'.