
Preface

In the past 30 years, there has been phenomenal growth in the area of data communications, to say the least. During the Vietnam War, one of my duty stations was on an island in the China Sea. I was part of a Signal Intelligence group, intercepting and decoding wartime communications traffic. We did our best to decode and analyze the information we intercepted, but there were many times when the help of a high-end (at that time) mainframe computer system was required. Did we have a communication network in place to just upload the data to the mainframe, let the mainframe do the processing, and then download the data back to us? Not a chance! We had to take the large magnetic tapes and give them to pilots on an SR-71 Blackbird, who flew the tapes to the United States for processing on a mainframe computer system. Once the results were obtained, we would receive a telephone call informing us of any critical information that had been found. It is hard to believe now that 30 years ago that was the way things were done.

Fast forward to today. There are data networks in place now that allow us to transmit information to and from virtually any location on Earth (and even in outer space to a degree) in a timely and efficient manner. But what has this tremendous enhancement in communications technology brought us? — another opportunity for criminal activity to take place. Who are the criminals in CyberSpace? One group to start with is organized crime ... such as the Mafia and others. What is their major focus? Financial activity, of course. They have found a new way to “mismanage” the financial resources (among other things) of others. Persons involved in foreign espionage activities also make use of our enhanced communication systems. They routinely break into government, military, and commercial computer networked systems and steal trade secrets, new designs, new formulas, etc. Even the data on your personal home computer is not safe. If you bring work home or handle your finances on your home computer system, both your personal data and your employer’s data could easily be at risk. I could go on, but I am sure you get the picture.