Thinking Differently: Bringing the Hacker Mindset to the Corporate Environment

Joe Grand (formerly known as NINJA)
Hacker?
Always questioning and learning.
Tries things that others think are impossible.
Solves problems in clever ways.
Like these guys...
Not like these guys...
Started in the early 1990s as a clubhouse for local hackers
- All met through BBSes in Boston, Massachusetts
- Store computer equipment
- Tinker w/ projects
- Experiment with new and old technologies
- Just hang out

Turned into tight-knit friends changing the face of computer security vulnerability research and disclosure
The Early Days (~1994)
The Early Days (~1994)
The L0pht

- Full disclosure of our discovered vulnerabilities, starting ~1996
  - One of the first groups to release advisories & exploit code
  - We didn't play favorites (and proud of it!)

- In the late 90s, decided to try and become self-sufficient
  - Cover rent and expenses w/ t-shirt, electronic kit, hacker CDs, and flea market sales
The Heyday (1996-1999)

They don’t build products; they tear them apart—and that’s why they have become the unofficial vanguard of security.
05/06/98 WED 15:00 FAX

FRED THOMPSON, TENNESSEE, CHAIRMAN

UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

May 5, 1998

LOpht Heavy Industries Technologies, Inc.
P.O. Box 990857
Boston, MA 02199-0857

Dear LOpht:

On Tuesday, May 19, the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs will hold a hearing to assess the information and computer security vulnerabilities in the Federal government.

Seven members of your organization are invited to appear before the Committee to present:

- Information on computer and communication system hacking;
- Specific security weaknesses in computer and communication systems which enable hackers to exploit information on these systems;
- Recommendations for improving system security in terms of software, hardware, and physical devices.
The L0pht

In 2000, joined forces w/ VC to start @stake

Newsweek, January 17, 2000
- Combined consulting services w/ pure research
  - Application, network, hardware, wireless
  - L0pht → @stake R&D Labs

- Focused on serving large corporate clients

- "Vendor neutral" at first...

- Acquired by Symantec in 2004

- L0pht members went their separate ways
Encourage innovation and tinkering.
Create an ivory tower.
Support the sharing of information.
Give in to pressure.
Try new things.
Go forth and hack!