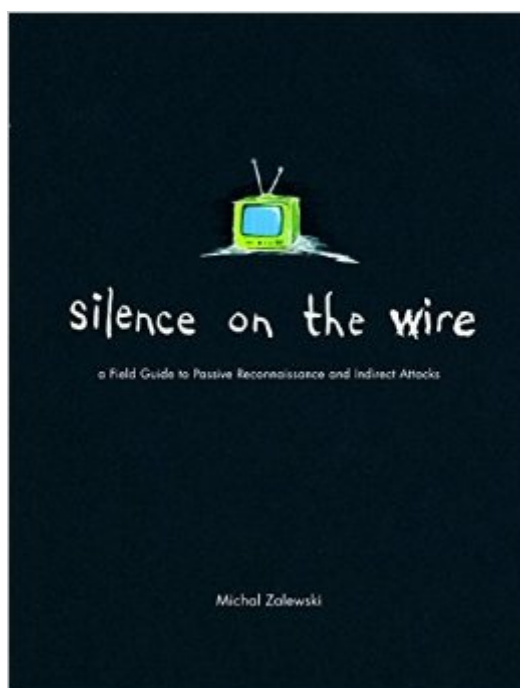


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# Silence On The Wire: A Field Guide To Passive Reconnaissance And Indirect Attacks



## Synopsis

There are many ways that a potential attacker can intercept information, or learn more about the sender, as the information travels over a network. *Silence on the Wire* uncovers these silent attacks so that system administrators can defend against them, as well as better understand and monitor their systems. *Silence on the Wire* dissects several unique and fascinating security and privacy problems associated with the technologies and protocols used in everyday computing, and shows how to use this knowledge to learn more about others or to better defend systems. By taking an in-depth look at modern computing, from hardware on up, the book helps the system administrator to better understand security issues, and to approach networking from a new, more creative perspective. The sys admin can apply this knowledge to network monitoring, policy enforcement, evidence analysis, IDS, honeypots, firewalls, and forensics.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I received *Silence on the Wire* (SOTW) almost one year ago. When I first tried reading the book, I couldn't get past Ch 1. In fact, I didn't try reading anything for three months, hoping I could re-engage SOTW. Eventually I put SOTW aside and read other books, only to return to SOTW this week. I'm glad I gave SOTW a second chance. There's plenty to like in this book if you look for the details that interest you. Don't get me wrong; SOTW is one of the most innovative and original computing books available. You will find it even more interesting if you are not familiar with many of the works the author summarizes or describes. Those of you who have been active for the last 5-10

years will recognize research on poor Initial Sequence Numbers, various timing attacks, remotely counting hosts behind NAT, and so on. In some cases the author added novel insights to this old research, or presented related but obscure new variations. NAT detection via MSS clamping (Ch 11) is one example. In some cases the author describes really cool techniques based on research I had not encountered. Parasitic storage and getting remote hosts to solve computational problems (Ch 16) are amazing ideas. Kudos to the author for including a bibliography, with references to many interesting papers. SOTW suffers from one major flaw. SOTW sometimes wastes far too much time getting to "the point." For example, Ch 2 spends 20 pages explaining internal CPU workings and logic gates before finally talking about timing attacks. This bothered me on two fronts. One, many readers do not need a rehash of computing basics. Two, I was less inclined to slog through those 20 pages because I did not know why they were included.

Irrespective of the myriad proclamations of systems or products being hackerproof, bulletproof and the like; given enough time and money, everything is breakable. Security purists may argue that one-time pads are provably and perfectly secure. While that is correct in the pristine halls of academic cryptography, the real world is littered with many one-time pads of dubious security. The fact that everything is breakable from an information security perspective is good news to Luddites and bad news for the paranoid. Hopefully, most people fall between those two opposites and with that, *Silence on the Wire: A Field Guide to Passive Reconnaissance and Indirect Attacks* is an fascinating book on knowing when to be suspicious and when to be complacent. The premise of the book is that there are countless ways that a potential attacker can intercept information and sniff data. The title points out that these silent stealth-like attacks are often difficult to detect, and all the more so to defend against. The better you understand the threats, the better you can monitor and defend against them. The author writes about his work with data reconnaissance and details how computers and networks operate, with a special emphasis on how they process and transmit data. With such transmissions, there are significant security threats; which is what this book details. Make note that this is not a For Dummies type of book. It is written for security engineers and experienced system administrators that have a heavy background in networking and security. Electronic engineers will feel very much at home with the many schematics and encodings in the code. The book is written for those that are very comfortable with programming and complex networks.

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