

Forum: [Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [HF Downtime Nov 2020](#)

Omniscient - November 15, 2020, 5:21 pm

Well this is going to be the truth about what happened the past 72 hours even though it's going to be a bit embarrassing.

HF gets attacks, a lot of them, all the time. I have a lot of automated security and get alerts if I'm away from my computer and HF goes offline.

When I take vacations I do not announce it for security reasons. Well, it just so happened a reasonable sized attack hit HF just as I was driving to California for the weekend to spend with family and friends. It's a 5 hour drive and I sat in agony the whole time as HF loaded slowly and I tried to communicate some actions to Xerotic. I was not driving btw.

I arrived in California Thursday afternoon around 3pm but immediately I have something planned till about 6pm. I know HF is loading slowly and the web socket isn't working and SSL Handshake errors are all over the place. Unfortunately I didn't have availability to deal with it.

Note that Xerotic is not a system administrator and his access to HF servers is limited. He does not have root access nor the skillset (yet) to manage the server. It's something I hope to guide him more with our test servers before giving him access to the HF servers.

About 6pm hits and I'm back at my hotel room and I whip open my laptop to take a look. I'd say that I'm a DDOS mitigation specialist because that's one of my main tasks running HF and I've been doing it for 14 years.

This is where it gets embarrassing for me. I normally don't need to use my laptop on trips. I always bring it but rarely have needed it. My automated DDOS protection has been fairly strong. But I always carry with me my credentials for access. When I finally did begin working with the laptop I was having trouble logging into the server as root. Root access is very much required to deal with a DDOS attack. I had only about 2 hours Thursday night before our dinner plans. I was not able to login as root.

Then on Friday morning I woke up extra early to get it sorted out. I got very close but again, did not gain root access in the two hour window I had before my scheduled events. It was really frustrating for me. I was kicking myself for not 100% confirming my access and setting up the laptop before leaving for vacation. I'm certain given enough time I'd have gotten into the server but it was unfair to my family and friends to also ruin their plans.

By Friday afternoon I made the decision to turn HF off for the weekend until I returned Sunday to properly deal with the issue.

It took me about 15 minutes to normalize HF. Took about 10 minutes more for attacks to resume and even less time for me to stop the attack. One person is claiming responsibility and trying to blackmail me for 1 BTC. Another person on social media claims HF has a RAT on the server. I'm sure other rumors were spread during the downtime.

1. No RAT on the server. That's ridiculous because you don't install RAT's into a LINUX server.

You install a SHELL.

2. Not gonna ever pay any ransom.

3. Attack was shit and easily stopped once I was in the server.

4. I don't care about the identity of the attacker nor about their motivation. I'm only ever concerned about keeping HF online.

5. HF is secure. Our server is not compromised. All data is safe and also backups exist off-server.

I assume the attacker will continue attacking. I don't really care. I'll figure it out and adjust and we'll continue business as usual. The ONLY reason we were effected was because I was on vacation. DDOS attacks are very normal part of my day.

On Friday I had Xerotic extend all HF paid advertising (Banners, Stickies, Sales Tags, and Featured Forum) for 3 days. So anyone with advertising should not be upset over lost time.

Meh, back to business as usual. I certainly want to apologize to everyone for being an idiot and locking myself out of server. Really noobish thing to do. It won't happen again.

Thank you.

The Amazing Sinner - November 15, 2020, 5:24 pm

I am glad HF is back online, this was an interesting read.

Thanks for all the work.

Dorrance - November 15, 2020, 5:26 pm

That vacation sounds like mental torcher, but glad to be back online.

xZalurex - November 15, 2020, 5:26 pm

Very very interesting read for sure, i know running a server and website like this can be really stressful. Take a deep breath and relax for a second. I appericate you posting and giving us this to read.

SIM-3343347 - November 15, 2020, 5:27 pm

Interesting thread, thanks for the update

Velma - November 15, 2020, 5:27 pm

We'll it's good to have the website backup, lets hope these people stop attacking.

Zeus - November 15, 2020, 5:28 pm

It's fine no worries these noobs wont effect how we feel about the site, been on here for 10 years 2 days downtime is nothing, as frustrating as it is. A good little break for you and for us. Hope your vacation wasn't ruined and you had some fun with your family.

Artisan - November 15, 2020, 5:28 pm

This will definitely put members at ease. Hope the attacker gets hit by karma and stops the DDOS and the blackmail.

vyactor - November 15, 2020, 5:29 pm

It's good to know that HF is safe and it's never doubtful when it's handled by you, Omni.

Great job though. I although wonder if people would go furious since they missed daily check-in.

Mr. Robot - November 15, 2020, 5:30 pm

I nominate Omni for the Dunce award for 1 month for locking himself out of root.
And then an A+ for handling it like a boss.

Omniscient - November 15, 2020, 5:31 pm

Quote:That vacation sounds like mental torcher, but glad to be back online.

I handled it well imho. Once HF was offline I was just accepting of it until I got back to deal with it. Not even an hour to take care of this. Had I gained root from my laptop I could have easily dealt with this within two hours (I'm slower on the laptop). Funny thing is that Saturdays are the slowest day of the week on HF. So being offline all day Saturday probably wasn't nearly a big of a deal.

Running HF all these years I've learned how to handle with the various stresses. I know that at any moment something shitty can happen. You guys have no idea the amount of crap I deal with on a regular basis. Nearly all of it is behind the scenes. This is a rare time when members were effected. One day, if I ever stop running HF, I'll be happy to tell some crazy stories.

ailo - November 15, 2020, 5:31 pm

Nice to see the site up again man

Nico - November 15, 2020, 5:34 pm

Wow, I can't believe you had the audacity to take a vacation while HF was being attacked and then decided to continue to pursue activities you already had planned in an attempt to not ruin your friends/families time as well... I see where your priorities lie... (sarcasm)

No seriously, why do you even feel you have to explain yourself to anyone? As long as your shit is dealt with and our credentials are secure, there should be no need to explain anything.

Regardless, thanks for the clarification.

Artificially - November 15, 2020, 5:34 pm

You really did good brother.Thanks for the update.
It's great to see hf online again.

dbm - November 15, 2020, 5:35 pm

Hoping it didn't reduce the quality of your California trip.

Who Soup - November 15, 2020, 5:38 pm

The down time didn't really bother me too much. It sounds like you had a lot on your plate at once with the attack and the trip going on at the same time, I'd probably be forgetting things too. Main thing is that you successfully mitigated the attack and kept us safe. It's probably pricy but you should at least take one of these attackers to court one day for damages; make an example out of someone so they know there's consequences.

Great job though and quick thinking, thanks.

Omniscient - November 15, 2020, 5:44 pm

Quote:I nominate Omni for the Dunce award for 1 month for locking himself out of root.

I'm sure I would have gotten in eventually. But it was a short vacation and we had plans everyday.

Quote:No seriously, why do you even feel you have to explain yourself to anyone? As long as your shit is dealt with and our credentials are secure, there should be no need to explain anything.

I've always been honest to members about downtime. It helps stop rumors. Best you get the real story from me directly.

Quote:Hope your vacation wasn't ruined and you had some fun with your family.

Does this look ruined?

Yin Yang - November 15, 2020, 5:46 pm

Glad that HF is back and running smoothly

Pyro - November 15, 2020, 5:48 pm

(Nov 15, 2020 06:31 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) You guys have no idea the amount of crap I deal with on a regular basis. Nearly all of it is behind the scenes.

I'm always interested to hear some stories behind the scene whenever u feel like sharing

Glad that everything is sorted out. Cheers

Nuworld - November 15, 2020, 5:49 pm

(Nov 15, 2020 06:28 PM)Zeus Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) It's fine no worries these noobs wont effect how we feel about the site, been on here for 10 years 2 days downtime is nothing, as frustrating as it is. A good little break for you and for us. Hope your vacation wasn't ruined and you had some fun with your family.

Thanks Omni for the update and all the great work. ?

I hope your vacation went well considering the facts.

These kids get banned/closed and can't handle rejection and go off the deep end.
It's the entitlement generation now days.

Anyhow glad you're back and all is good.?

Edit: perhaps later you could share there IP and other info and let us have at them.

Mr. Corleone - November 15, 2020, 5:56 pm

I think it's impressive of you being able to admit the truth behind what happened man.

Your openness is appreciated, I don't think many members will blame you haha.

Zeus - November 15, 2020, 5:56 pm

(Nov 15, 2020 06:30 PM)Mr. Robot Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I nominate Omni for the Dunce award for 1 month for locking himself out of root.

And then an A+ for handling it like a boss.

I think you should get the dunce regardless my friend ???

Jacque Fresco - November 15, 2020, 6:07 pm

Life doesnt end just because hf is down for some time. thanks however for always dealing with it. i hope you had a good time, i had that too, as everyone here probably too. so lol who gives a fck about these ddos loosers

Kill Joy - November 15, 2020, 6:14 pm

Since the attack was so shit, perhaps it was Enlightened. Half kidding.

Shit happens and now to move on and finish out 2020 on HF. :)

Bear - November 15, 2020, 6:16 pm

Shit happens man. Glad you could have the weekend with your family and friends and not worry about this non sense.

Thanks a lot for bringing back the forum!

Proof - November 15, 2020, 6:22 pm

Appreciate the update, glad to know it was minor.

Haters gonna hate.

Aeowulf - November 15, 2020, 6:25 pm

Shit happens, especially here. Glad you got it sorted, and punks don't get no ransomware money from you.

Keep it up!

?ytes - November 15, 2020, 6:27 pm

Who was the fucker trying to blackmail over shitty ddos attacks? Was he out of his mind?
I hope [Omniscient](#) finds the real culprit.

Angel - November 15, 2020, 6:28 pm

Happy to hear that everything got resolved quick , thanks for the update boss

Quen - November 15, 2020, 6:31 pm

You're a great guy. People are jealous of you. Thanks boss.

Craig - November 15, 2020, 6:49 pm

Glad to see the forums back online! But more importantly, I'm happy you decided to take HF offline for the weekend and spending that time with your family/friends, we all need a vacation. ;D

vatrenilav - November 15, 2020, 6:53 pm

Omni, Thank you for turning on again this Forum. This is the best place on whole internet :)

Grim - November 15, 2020, 6:55 pm

Glad we're back online and thanks for the explanation hopefully it didn't ruin your weekend to badly

n0\$f3ratu\$ - November 15, 2020, 7:13 pm

(Nov 15, 2020 06:21 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I certainly want to apologize to everyone for being an idiot and locking myself out of server. Really noobish thing to do. It won't happen again.

Thank you.

You don't need to apologize in any way.

This things happens to the best of us.

Is good to see HF is back online.

CyberError - November 15, 2020, 7:15 pm

Welcome back HF really missed it, and thanks Omni again

Sorry for the stress you had, i read your Twitter replies where skiddy asking for Ransom and trolling unnecessarily

Gary Clark Jr. - November 15, 2020, 7:37 pm

Thanks Omnomms - I'm sure many HF users used this time to get some fresh air outside.

Ah!

A + - November 15, 2020, 7:52 pm

Glad it wasn't too big of an issue. Wrong place wrong time, it happens.

Prince™ - November 15, 2020, 8:39 pm

All good Omni. Thanks for taking care of things despite being on a vacation.

Almonds - November 15, 2020, 8:45 pm

Good to be back gentlemen. ?

Prox - November 15, 2020, 8:59 pm

Family comes first, even if you manage a billion dollar business.

Glad everything is back to normal.

Sugawara - November 15, 2020, 9:01 pm

Was I the only one who was checking HF after every hour? Subconsciously.

Rezon ® - November 15, 2020, 10:18 pm

Appriciate the honesty, its great its back online.

Thanks [Omniscient](#)

Blazin - November 15, 2020, 10:30 pm

Happy hackforums is back. The ssl handshake error gave us something else to do this weekend. Now it's back and we can get our fix!

Thanks for the update Omni. Hopefully you can ensure you always have root with you on a laptop or mobile device. Either way a weekend won't kill us.

Precisio? - November 15, 2020, 10:41 pm

Thank you for all your hard works [Omniscient](#), it is really appreciated how you put your time on HF while you were on a vacation.

Happy to see HF is back online again.

Jinu - November 15, 2020, 10:42 pm

Running a site like HF is not easy; it seems. Thank you, Omni, for the care of the forum as well as its users.

MarvinMalware - November 15, 2020, 10:52 pm

Sounds like quite the damn weekend, as unfortunate as it was shutting down for the weekend seems to be the best call made for the given situation.

Sort of a good laugh though that someone really thought they were a hardass and all that for a few days, only to see their efforts collapse in minutes.?

Eagle 95 - November 15, 2020, 11:03 pm

It's awesome news we're back once again. :D

123 - November 15, 2020, 11:06 pm

HF has become a part of our daily routine. I checked few times to see if it's back or not. Glad it's finally back and everything is back to normal.

Varane - November 15, 2020, 11:13 pm

I appreciate the 1 day bonus extension. Happy to see everything back to normal.

Instagram - November 15, 2020, 11:19 pm

Glad that this is able to clear my questions thanks!

sweatpants - November 16, 2020, 12:09 am

Thank you for the hard work you put into hf, sorry to hear you had to take away from family bonding and vacation time. We all appreciate your efforts to keeping us safe and able to use this forum

Mister Slyther - November 16, 2020, 12:33 am

Very interesting thread, well-done sir, and thank you for your efforts.

618C - November 16, 2020, 12:52 am

Thanks for this story, was really curious about what went wrong :)

Also im wondering is this (HF) your fulltime job OP ?

Maskin - November 16, 2020, 12:56 am

Sometimes I think I'm a failure but at least I'm not whoever attacks HF with 1st page google methods and trying to blackmail for 1 BTC ?

Goku - November 16, 2020, 1:07 am

(Nov 15, 2020 06:21 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I'm certain given enough time I'd have gotten into the server but it was unfair to my family and friends to also ruin their plans.

By Friday afternoon I made the decision to turn HF off for the weekend until I returned Sunday to properly deal with the issue.

Honestly, best decision. Family and friends are more important.

And turning HF off for the weekend wasn't that bad.

People should not depend on an online service for their main income. That's their fault.

This can happen to every platform there is, not only HF.

FFcom - November 16, 2020, 1:08 am

Shit happens, and it usually does for a reason, even if we don't understand what it is.

No harm done, I'm sure.

I hope you were able to enjoy your time with your family, despite it all.

Good to have HF back up again!

Goku - November 16, 2020, 1:08 am

(Nov 16, 2020 12:06 AM)123 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) HF has become a part of our daily routine. I checked few times to see if it's back or not. Glad it's finally back and everything is back to normal.

Same ?

Roytoy - November 16, 2020, 1:11 am

I don't understand how some people could attempt to hijack someone's source of income like that. This is the equivalent of robbing someone's house. It has direct impact on your income. Very sad.

• **Enlil Wolf** • - November 16, 2020, 1:12 am

Thank you for updating us with what was happening.

Though I do feel bad that you had to go through this over the weekend especially when you were trying to have a lovely weekend with friends & family. All in all, glad to have HF back and curses to the one asking for ransom...

Only thing is, the whole daily ninja goal got reset and I guess nothing can be done for that - guess it's back to day one.

False King - November 16, 2020, 1:21 am

(Nov 15, 2020 06:31 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) One day, if I ever stop running HF, I'll be happy to tell some crazy stories.

Sounds like a possibility for a book.

Xerotic - November 16, 2020, 1:23 am

(Nov 16, 2020 02:12 AM)• **Enlil Wolf** • Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Thank you for updating us with what was happening.

Though I do feel bad that you had to go through this over the weekend especially when you were trying to have a lovely weekend with friends & family. All in all, glad to have HF back and curses to the one asking for ransom...

Only thing is, the whole daily ninja goal got reset and I guess nothing can be done for that - guess it's back to day one.

DCI was not reset. Looks like you missed November 15th check-in thread.

Xen - November 16, 2020, 1:23 am

I think you deserve another vacation.

Thank you for everything Omniscient.

Fortunate - November 16, 2020, 1:27 am

(Nov 15, 2020 06:21 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) It took me about 15 minutes to normalize HF. Took about 10 minutes more for attacks to resume and even less time for me to stop the attack. One person is claiming responsibility and trying to blackmail me for 1 BTC. Another person on social media claims HF has a RAT on the server. I'm sure other rumors were spread during the downtime.

Great decision making, you did amazing. I was laughing my ass off when reading through the blackmailers Twitter messages. I know there's a 16 year old skid behind the screen who's face looks like a Call Of Duty radar. Just a random ass dude trying to act scary attacking a vulnerable port with his "army". Just hilarious.

Good to have HF back, you deserve another vacation. Thanks!

tsuki - November 16, 2020, 1:28 am

(Nov 16, 2020 02:21 AM)Wessel Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Sounds like a possibility for a book.

It does, actually. An amalgamation of all the crazy anecdotes and tales of Omni and his adventures of managing the largest hacking community in existence for over a decade. I'd definitely pay for a

book like that.

Fortunate - November 16, 2020, 1:29 am

(Nov 16, 2020 02:21 AM)Wessel Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Sounds like a possibility for a book.
I'd totally buy that. Could be one of the first pschical HF donation items.

• **Enlil Wolf** • - November 16, 2020, 1:30 am

(Nov 16, 2020 02:23 AM)Xerotic Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) DCI was not reset. Looks like you missed November 15th check-in thread.

Oh, okay. I didn't know that, I thought the forums would be closed over the weekend. Missed it.
Thanks for clearing my doubts, I appreciate it.

Neon™ - November 16, 2020, 1:38 am

Hahaha good stuff Omni and Xerotic! Imagine the skid thought for real they can get 1 BTC out of you ? the other one with the RAT on the server had me in tears tho ?? learn how stuff works before you claim responsibility for the attack lol.

False King - November 16, 2020, 2:02 am

(Nov 16, 2020 02:27 AM)Fortunate Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Great decision making, you did amazing. I was laughing my ass off when reading through the blackmailers Twitter messages. I know there's a 16 year old skid behind the screen who's face looks like a Call Of Duty radar. Just a random ass dude trying to act scary attacking a vulnerable port with his "army". Just hilarious.

Good to have HF back, you deserve another vacation. Thanks!

Man, those Tweets are hilarious. Especially that Shaye guy, claiming Omni doesn't know the server's "REAL" IP address. Thanks for pointing this out, had a good laugh.

NoSuchAgency - November 16, 2020, 2:33 am

A 1 btc ransom for ddos attacks sure is comedic gold.

Thanks for the update, I was curious.

Sativa - November 16, 2020, 2:36 am

Isn't all this stressful though for you? Taking the weekend off only to have worry about this forum. I mean don't get me wrong all this is great but yea I kinda know a little bit what that feels like :/ hope everything is ok now.

Mr. Atlas - November 16, 2020, 2:58 am

You're an omni boss, we don't blame you at all
peace on you

Net - November 16, 2020, 3:47 am

Was wondering why is it taking so long for a fix until I read the part that you were away.

Glad everything is fixed now.

Regulus - November 16, 2020, 3:53 am

Thanks for the update.

I respect your hard work <3

Exalted - November 16, 2020, 3:56 am

Thanks for the update; glad to see that we're back!

SIM-3205632 - November 16, 2020, 5:42 am

Everybody makes mistakes but it takes a man to own up to them. Thanks for keeping HF safe for the past 14 years. Love the forums.

tux1 - November 16, 2020, 9:55 am

Glad HF is back! Thanks for keeping us all posted :)

1337GAMER - November 16, 2020, 10:01 am

Thanks for communicating what occurred in the last few days. Glad to hear everything went smoothly, for the most part :)

Deany - November 16, 2020, 11:12 am

Glad we are back online. Thanks.

Covalent - November 16, 2020, 11:32 am

Thank you for explaining this. Most WebAdmin's wouldn't share such items if they were "embarrassed" about it. Glad to see some are man enough.

account_ - November 16, 2020, 11:50 am

Thanks for the update Boss.

webdev77 - November 16, 2020, 1:09 pm

(Nov 15, 2020 06:21 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Another person on social media claims HF has a RAT on the server.

That dumbass is a serial ban evader. No surprise there of course but it almost makes it funnier because they are addicted to making HF accounts.

Angela White - November 16, 2020, 1:14 pm

Thanks for clearing stuff up. I was a little confused on why it took the whole weekend but if you were on vacation and the only person with complete access, that's completely understandable.

All this weekend did was made me realize how much time I actually spend on HF. I think I tried getting on here at least twice an hour for both days ?

Mr. Robot - November 16, 2020, 2:08 pm

(Nov 16, 2020 02:14 PM)KasprDev Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Thanks for clearing stuff up. I was a little confused on why it took the whole weekend but if you were on vacation and the only person with complete access, that's completely understandable.

All this weekend did was made me realize how much time I actually spend on HF. I think I tried getting on here at least twice an hour for both days ?

If anything this thread provides a source of confidence for the users knowing Omni is the only one with root access.

iNviZ - November 16, 2020, 2:15 pm

Great work man, we are all human, that's not that huge of a mistake. HF has been running great for a long time and I think we all greatly appreciate the hard work you put in HF keeping it up and running.

St?Ik?r - November 16, 2020, 2:16 pm

Thanks for the update and the work you put in hf!

Blazin - November 16, 2020, 6:04 pm

(Nov 16, 2020 03:08 PM)Mr. Robot Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) If anything this thread provides a source of confidence for the users knowing Omni is the only one with root access.
I second that actually. Gives me confidence in the site.

NERO - November 17, 2020, 2:14 am

It's unfortunate that your family vacation was ruined by these scumbags, Thanks for all your hard work, Certainly one for the Wiki!

ScorpionX - November 17, 2020, 2:32 am

Sorry about your experience. Doesn't sound like a vacation to me though. With all these things to worry about. I'm glad HF is back online.

Blockonome - November 17, 2020, 2:50 am

Thank you, tha holy protector of HF, I appreciate all your hard work, and hope your next holiday will be more relaxing!

Effexion - November 17, 2020, 4:28 am

Wow, you have some dedication to the site. Hats off, Omni. I hope your next holiday is full of R&R and not work,