

**UNAUTHORIZED USE OF A COMPUTER**  
**Penal Law § 156.05**  
**(Committed on or after Nov. 1, 2006)**

The (*specify*) count is Unauthorized Use of a Computer.

Under our law, a person is guilty of unauthorized use of a computer when he or she knowingly uses, causes to be used, or accesses a computer, computer service, or computer network without authorization.

*[Add if applicable:*

It is a defense that the defendant had reasonable grounds to believe that he or she had authorization to use the computer.]<sup>1</sup>

The following terms used in that definition have a special meaning:

COMPUTER means a device or group of devices which, by manipulation of electronic, magnetic, optical or electrochemical impulses, pursuant to a computer program, can automatically perform arithmetic, logical, storage or retrieval operations with or on computer data, and includes any connected or directly related device, equipment or facility which enables such computer to store, retrieve or communicate to or from a person, another computer or another device the results of computer operations, computer programs or computer data.<sup>2</sup>

COMPUTER SERVICE means any and all services provided by or through the facilities of any computer communication system allowing the input, output, examination, or transfer, of computer data or computer programs from one

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<sup>1</sup>Penal Law §156.50(1).

<sup>2</sup>Penal Law §156.00(1).

computer to another.<sup>3</sup>

COMPUTER NETWORK means the interconnection of hardwire or wireless communication lines with a computer through remote terminals, or a complex consisting of two or more interconnected computers.<sup>4</sup>

ACCESS means to instruct, communicate with, store data in, retrieve from, or otherwise make use of any resources of a computer, physically, directly or by electronic means.<sup>5</sup>

WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION means to use or to access a computer, computer service or computer network without the permission of the owner or lessor or someone licensed or privileged by the owner or lessor where the actor<sup>6</sup> knew that his or her use or access was without permission or after actual notice to such person that such use or access was without permission. It shall also mean the access of a computer service by a person without permission where such person knew that such access was without permission or after actual notice to such person, that such access was without permission.<sup>7</sup>

*[Add if applicable:*

Under our law, proof that a person used or accessed a computer, computer service or computer network through the knowing use of a set of instructions, code or computer program that

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<sup>3</sup>Penal Law §156.00(4).

<sup>4</sup> Penal Law §156.00(6).

<sup>5</sup> Penal Law §156.00(7).

<sup>6</sup> The words “the actor” have been substituted for the statutory language “such person” for clarity.

<sup>7</sup> Penal Law § 156.00(8).

bypasses, defrauds or otherwise circumvents a security measure installed or used with the user's authorization on the computer, computer service or computer network shall be presumptive evidence that such person used or accessed such computer, computer service or computer network without authorization.<sup>8</sup>

What this means is that if the People have proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the person used or accessed a computer, computer service or computer network through the knowing use of a set of instructions, code or computer program that bypasses, defrauds or otherwise circumvents a security measure installed or used with the user's authorization on the computer, computer service or computer network, then you may, but you are not required to, infer from those facts that such person used or accessed such computer, computer service or computer network without authorization.]

A person KNOWINGLY uses, causes to be used, or accesses a computer, computer service, or computer network without authorization when that person is aware that he or she is using, causing to be used, or accessing such computer, computer service, or computer network without authorization.<sup>9</sup>

In order for you to find the defendant guilty of this crime, the People are required to prove, from all the evidence in the case, beyond a reasonable doubt, [both/each] of the following [two/three] elements:

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<sup>8</sup> Penal Law §156.00(8).

<sup>9</sup> See, Penal Law § 15.05(2). An expanded definition of "knowingly" is available in the General Charges section under Culpable Mental States.

1. That on or about *(date)*, in the county of *(county)*, the defendant, *(defendant's name)*, used, caused to be used, or accessed a computer, computer service, or computer network without authorization; [and]
2. That the defendant did so knowingly; [and]

*Add if applicable:*

- [3. That the defendant did not have reasonable grounds to believe that he/she had authorization to use the computer.]

If you find the People have proven beyond a reasonable doubt [both / each] of those elements, you must find the defendant guilty of this crime.

If you find the People have not proven beyond a reasonable doubt [either one / any one or more] of those elements, you must find the defendant not guilty of this crime.