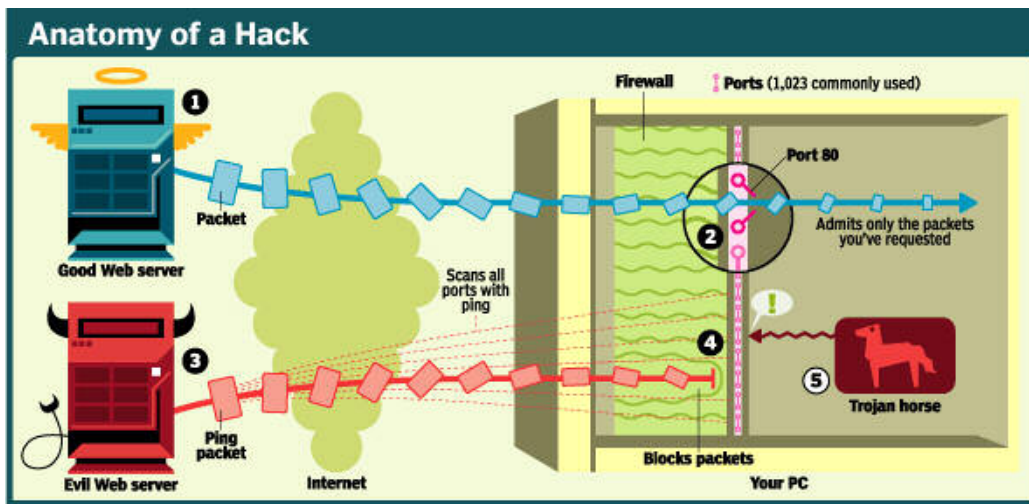# Anatomy of a Hack

1. Web servers send sequences of packets to your computer over the Internet. Each packet has a header that identifies the source and destination computer by IP address and port number.

2. Normal Web traffic enters your computer through port 80 (there are 1,023 commonly used ports). A firewall lets only packets you've requested pass through the port.

3. Evildoers set programs to scan all ports for a range of IP addresses in an attempt to find computers that will grant them access.

4. The firewall prevents any response from your ports, so the scanning program thinks that there's no computer at your IP address.

5. If you don't use a firewall to block your ports, a hacker may place a Trojan horse program file (such as Back Orifice, Netbus, or Sub7) on your computer. Such programs are designed to send information from your system to the hacker while you're on the Internet. When a Trojan horse tries to send data, a good personal firewall will block it and alert you of the attempt.