

# Israel's unit 8200: cyber warfare

Israel demonstrated its intent to conquer cyber warfare in the 1990s by presenting the country's legions of hackers with a choice between prison and working for the state.

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Thousands are said to have signed up since then and have been incorporated into the defence forces Unit 8200.

In the intelligence community it is regarded as a singularly **Israeli** (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel>) act of bravura that has given the country an edge in a world that has been rapidly immersed in cross border technology attacks.



Israel has led the way in combating cyber attacks Photo: ALAMY

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Hackers, who invariably learn their skills engaging in illegal activity as teenagers, offer key advantages to countries seeking to defend against cyber warfare, or go on the offensive against an enemy.

The Negev desert based Unit 8200 has evolved from the signal intelligence arm of the Israeli military into a respected leader in high technology warfare. One American consultancy rated Unit 8200 as the sixth biggest initiator of cyber attacks on the plants.

It is a rapidly growing field. The Russians and Chinese have been implicated in thousands of attacks on foreign targets every year. The West is scrambling to bolster its capabilities.

The US has set up Cyber Command to coordinate its ability to withstand an attack. Britain has Cyber Security Operations based at GCHQ, as well as Ministry of Defence and Cabinet Office units to guard the national infrastructure.

The level of attacks isn't published but officials describe the risk as grave and growing.