

**MATCH** 



**SWEET** 

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### near the 50-yard like that spelled "MIT" before it burst into a cloud of talcum powder. At halftime, hackers disguised as the Yale Marching Band laid on the field to spell "M-I-T" with their prone bodies. Later, they tricked 1,000-plus

Harvard fans into spelling "M-I-T" with cards in the stands.

THE HARVARD-YALE FOOTBALL GAME (1982)

GREAT DROID ON THE GREAT DOME (1999) Two days before the release of Star Wars: The Phantom Menace, the Great Dome was transformed—with black paint, blue fabric, and red burlap—into R2-D2, the robot sidekick from the Star Wars movies. The courteous hackers provided

Three hacks, one game. With eight minutes remaining in the second quarter, hackers inflated a six-foot weather balloon

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#### In MIT-speak, "tool" can refer to one who studies hard. Hackers transformed Lobby 7 into a tool-dedicated cathedral, complete with stained-glass windows, pews, an altar, an organ, a confessional, and holy relics. An anonymous "Father

THE CATHEDRAL OF OUR LADY OF THE ALL-NIGHT TOOL (1992)

detailed disassembly instructions addressed to "Imperial Drones" and signed "Rebel Scum."

Tool" provided commandments, including "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's HP." Shortly after midnight on Halloween, a Wiccan wedding was held between two MIT alumni. THE GREAT SNOW HACK (1968)

On a windy winter night, students gathered buckets of snow and filled the dorm's shower stalls. They then opened the windows and turned on the shower, creating a hazy, simulated blizzard. They then called the Boston Herald Traveler, claiming that they had invented a shower nozzle that makes snow. The Herald sent a photographer and ran the story on



## **MEASURING A SMOOT (1958)** After a Lambda Chi Alpha headmaster grew tired of the boring half-mile walk across the Harvard Bridge, he invited

their front page the next day.

seven students to calibrate the bridge using 5'7 freshman Ollie Smoot. The Bridge's length: 364.4 Smoots, give or take an ear. Today, Smoots are marked permanently on the bridge and the measurement is recognized in the American Heritage



# (Hey, it was 1987.) "Nerd" and "Xing" were emblazed to the left and right of the silhouette on the bright yellow sign.

NERD XING (1987)

CAMPUS POLICE CAR ON THE GREAT DOME (1994)

On the final day of spring classes, an MIT Campus Police Cruiser—complete with flashing lights—appeared on the top of the Great Dome. The car, which was actually the painted frame of a Chevrolet Cavalier, was equipped with a dummy police officer, a box of donuts, a campus parking ticket, and the license plate number "IHTFP." The hack, which only lasted a few hours, was covered by the Associated Press and received national and global television coverage.

The Nerd Xing sign has been called the gold standard of MIT sign hacks. Posted above a crosswalk at 77 Massachusetts Ave., a non-descript silhouette was turned into an MIT student equipped with a back pack, a lab kit, and floppy disk.



**VOTE** 

#### On Charles Vest's first day as MIT President, Vice President Constantine Simonides '57 arrived early to open his office. When he arrived, <mark>he thought he was on the wrong floor</mark>. In reality, a massive bulletin board had been carefully placed in

PRESIDENT VEST'S DISAPPEARING OFFICE (1990)

front of the president's office door. After removing the board, Vest's staff entered his office to find a bottle of champagne placed on the president's desk.

During spring break, MIT students traveled cross-country to rival Caltech and—posing as the fictional Howe & Ser Moving Company—transported the school's three-ton Fleming House cannon back to Cambridge. The cannon, com-



#### plete with an oversized Brass Rat on its barrel, was on display in front of the Green Building just in time for Campus Preview Weekend. More than 30 students were involved in the 10-day hack.

CALTECH CANNON HEIST (2006)

DIPSY DUCK (1948)

During an MIT Open House, the infamous 1940s hack squad VooDoo unveiled the Dipsy Duck, a 12' long supposed generator that could be placed near rivers to produce exactly 3.14159 ( $\pi$ ) volts. The hackers also claimed the duck-looking

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## JOHN HARVARD'S PORTA-POTTY SERVICE (1960) Tourists visiting the John Harvard statue in Harvard Yard may have been surprised to see the statue seemingly double as a public restroom. A toilet stall door was positioned at the statue's base with an advertisement reading, "Johnny-on-the-

device could be powered by beer. In reality, it was powered by an electric motor.

Spot, Portable Toilets, Rented/Serviced, Boston, Mass. Capital 7-0777"

On the same day that the goddess Athena appeared in Killian Court, hackers commemorated the 40th anniversary of Neil Armstrong's moon walk by placing a replica of the Apollo Lunar Module on the Great Dome. The module, which



## was half-scale, included an American flag, communications antennae, and an egress platform.

LUNAR MODULE ON THE GREAT DOME (2009)

TETRIS ON THE GREEN BUILDING (2012)

"The Holy Grail of Hacks." During Campus Preview Weekend, Bldg. 54 was transformed into a giant video game canvas,

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#### with students and alumni battling each other in a multicolor game of Tetris. Players controlled the blocks from a console in front of the building. Each game began with the word "TETRIS" scrolling across the building and, upon defeat, the

blocks crashed to the bottom.

KIDNAPPING HARVARD GUESTS (1940S) In the early 1940s, Harvard celebrity guests were the subject of periodic "kidnappings." In 1940, MIT students inter-

cepted actor Eddie Anderson at a Providence airport and brought him to a fraternity party. In 1941, an MITer posing as

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## a Harvard student picked up burlesque queen Sally Rand and transported her to a reception, where she was granted the title "Associate Professor of Entertainment Engineering."

CHANGED INSCRIPTION IN LOBBY 7 (1994) The inscription etched in stone in Lobby 7 reads, "Established for Advancement and Development of Science its Appli-

cation to Industry the Arts Agriculture and Commerce." A few days before fall classes began, the words "Agriculture and

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## Commerce" were changed to "Entertainment and Hacking." Hackers used Styrofoam that was painted to resemble stone and held in place by spring-loaded devices.

COW ON DORM (1928)

Students somehow transported a live cow to the roof of the six-story Class of 1893 Dormitory (now East Campus dorm). A May 1928 Boston Herald article reported that the cow went up to the roof easily but a "small army" was needed to bring

her down, where the hackers were met by hundreds of cheering onlookers.