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Is your refrigerator *really* part of a massive spam-sending botnet?

Ars unravels the report that hackers have commandeered 100,000 smart devices.

by Dan Goodin - Jan 17, 2014 8:25 pm UTC









iOS 8, thoroughly reviewed

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3 March 2014 Last updated at 16:13 GMT



Hackers take control of 300,000 home routers



It is not yet clear what the attackers plan to do with their network of hijacked routers

A world-spanning network of hijacked home routers has been uncovered by security researchers.

The network involves more than 300,000 routers in homes and small businesses that have been taken over through loopholes in their core software.

Discovered by researchers at Team Cymru, the network is thought to be

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Features & A

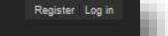














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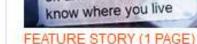
Mining cryptocurrencies is expensive. One hacker passed the cost on to NAS users.

by Dan Goodin - Jun 18, 2014 4:45 pm UTC









12-year-old's online life brings an abductor to her doorstep

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was gonna kidnap me

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ok and but he doesn't







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IoT risks

- Not secure by design
 - Focus is on easy deployability and UX sort of opposite to security
- Typically not updated automatically
 - Manual updating may not be available to normal consumers either
 - Vulnerability in open source software (hearbleed, shellshock, etc) often affect IoT devices as well and don't always require device-specific exploit code.
- Detection and remediation difficult or impossible
 - Consumers have no way of detecting their NAS box or Smart TV has malware on it
 - Even if a consumer suspects malware, how can they get rid of it? (even factory reset doesn't always do the trick)



Example hack: Samsung Smart TV

- Samsung Smart TV is a pretty standard Linux machine
- Remote control devices (smart phone, tablet) etc. authenticated by MAC only – also, if you use NULL as MAC in the request, the weak authentication is bypassed completely.
- Remote control app can change the device into developer mode
- In developer mode the TV will allow running (root) applications from any selected web server
- → Full compromise very simple without any overflows or such





Why hack a toaster?

- Making money
 - Spamming, DDoS, bitcoin mining, clickfraud
- Infrastructure and access
 - Bridgehead to other attacks, hosting malware, etc.
- Blackmail
 - "If you don't pay up, I will burn down your house with the toaster"
- Spying / voyerism
 - Many IoT devices has webcams especially security cameras and nannycams but also things like Xbox Kinect and high end smart TVs
- Hiding your tracks
 - Criminals want to hide their tracks by proxying through hacked devices ("using neighbors Wifi")



Differences between "any loT device" and your PC



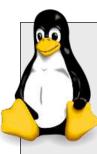
No (or very little) stored personal information

- People not expected to do online banking or reading emails on their refrigerator
- Typically nothing of value can be stolen from the device itself



Less CPU power

And other resources



Linux OS (or no OS at all)

- Stripped down Linux
- Microcontroller-based devices typically have no OS at all



No display or keyboard

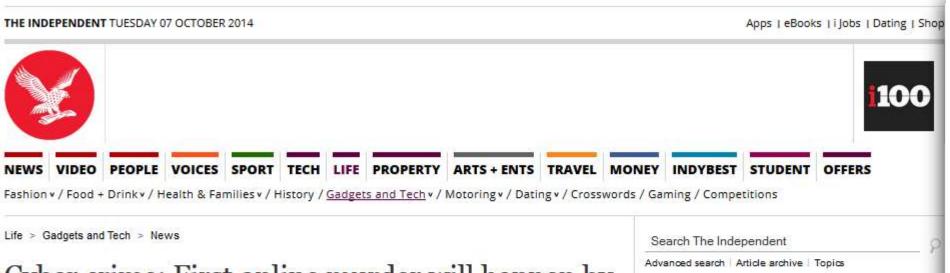
 Maybe some buttons and small led display but not a full display



More dramatic threats

- Murders by hacking pacemakers, burglaries by hacking locking systems, blackmail by hacking car control systems, etc.
- These will all happen, and not in too distant future
- However, they won't be a threat to the average consumer during the next three years
 - They are targeted attacks: Not a problem for the masses but also really difficult to protect from





Cyber crime: First online murder will happen by end of year, warns US firm



The Europol threat assessment published last week cited a report by US security firm IID that predicted the first murder via "hacked internet-connected device" by the end of 2014. There have been no proven cases of murder by tampering with devices but hackers have highlighted numerous flaws in computer security systems.

In a series of high-profile stunts, Barnaby Jack hacked into cash machines to make them spew money, and exploited a flaw in an insulin pump. He died last year just before he was about to demonstrate how pacemakers could be hacked.

The former US vice-president Dick Cheney – who has a long history of heart problems – revealed last year that the wireless function had been disabled on his implanted defibrillator because of concerns that outsiders could hack the network and provoke a heart attack.

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