

Hacker modifies toy drone to hack and take over other toy drones

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(Phys.org) —Well known hacker Samy Kamkar has figured out a way to program a store-bought drone to take away control of other store-bought drones from their owners, and then to give the enslaved drones commands of its own. He calls the result SkyJack. Even more dramatically, he's created a video describing how to do it so that others

can create their own drone hackers, and has posted it all on his [blog](#).

Samy Kamkar achieved fame by knocking MySpace offline in 2005 (and going to jail for it). After going straight, he was one of those people instrumental in exposing phone makers that were adding tracking capabilities to smartphones. In this latest endeavor, he's added off-the-shelf hardware and Internet available code to a commercially sold drone—the quadcopter Parrot—to allow it to hack other Parrot drones.

The concept is rather simple, he added a small single board computer (Raspberry Pi circuit board) that runs Linux, to his Parrot, installed some code and then added a little battery and two tiny wireless transmitters. Once airborne, the drone listens for a Wifi signal, if it hears one, it looks for a MAC address from a list it has, if a match is found, the device sends a disabling code, revoking control from the drone's owner. Then his [drone](#) pretends it's the rightful owner and starts sending control codes to the enslaved Parrot, directing its flight, and/or sending back images from its camera.

More than anything, the SkyJack appears to be a stunt of sorts, coming on the heels of an announcement by Amazon that it plans to deliver packages via drones someday soon. The makers of Parrot will obviously be embarrassed by Kamkar 's work, but will undoubtedly add security features to them, preventing them from being skyjacked, which they probably should have done before selling them in the first place. His actions do however, highlight the increasing presence of drones in our lives and how those that make them need to be sure that they can't be hacked, lest pizza's or mail order socks in the future be delivered to the wrong address, or worse, fall prey to those wishing to create a fleet of enslaved roaming drones darkening our skies with menace.

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