

# Software maverick McAfee warns China of hacking weakness

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John McAfee, founder of the eponymous anti-virus company, addresses the China Internet Security Conference in Beijing on August 16, 2016

China leads the world in connecting everyday devices to the internet, but is creating huge hacking vulnerabilities for itself and others by doing so, renegade American software pioneer John McAfee warned Tuesday.

Hackers had already been able to gain control of devices such as safes

and heating controls, and take over the computer systems of automobiles and aeroplanes, he said.

"China is taking the lead in putting intelligence into devices, from refrigerators to smart thermostats, and this is our weakest link in cybersecurity," he said in Beijing.

"I am hoping that in the short time I am here I can raise a warning flag that we have to take security of these devices even more importantly than our large computers or our smart phones," he told a conference of internet security professionals.

"Because there are so many more of these devices, and the more that are connected, then the higher the risk of a potential hack becomes."

McAfee, 70, is the colourful founder of an antivirus software company who once fled Belize after police sought to question him in a murder case.

He has since returned to the United States, where he announced he was running for president.

He amassed an estimated \$100 million fortune during the early days of the internet in the 1990s, but lost most of it to bad investments and the financial crisis.

He was living with a 17-year-old girl in Belize when police came looking for him to discuss the killing of his neighbour—a crime of which he maintains his innocence. He was briefly incarcerated and fled the Central American country.

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