

Samsung TVs, CIA Spying Tools?

Written by Marco Attard
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According to the "Vault 7" mega-trove of documents dumped by WikiLeaks CIA and MI5 surveillance techniques extend to consumer devices-- the intelligence agencies can apparently even use Samsung TVs to spy on people.



If the documents are correct, a number of Samsung TVs feature a "Fake Off" mode. Ominously dubbed "Weeping Angel" (a reference to a sinister episode of the Doctor Who series), it allows TVs to remain on even if it looks like the power is off, allowing spies to capture audio and possibly even video from the room in question.

TVs reportedly affected by the hack are 2012 (UNES8000F, E8000GF plasma and UNES7550F) and 2013 (UNF8000 series, F8500 plasma, UNF7500 series and UNF7000 series) models featuring outdated version 1111, 1112 and 1116 firmware. Thankfully there is one way one check whether Fake Off is in operation-- a blue LED on the back of the set remains on.

In addition, as well as TVs the intelligence agencies hack into mobile devices, with the CIA using a specialised Mobile Development Branch to produce malware to "infest, control and exfiltrate data from iPhones and other Apple products." Another unit does similar work targeting Android devices.

If customers are concerned about their TVs getting hacked, there is at least one sure way of stopping such attempts-- plugging them off the internet.

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