

Hackable home project: Euroconsumers unveils worrying results for smart device owners

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Brussels - 1st September - Today 1st September 2021, Euroconsumers, the world's leading consumer cluster, is releasing the results of its 'Hackable Home' project, which has tested the security and reliability of connected home devices across the four European countries of Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and Italy.

Multiple vulnerabilities

The security and confidentiality of 16 smart devices have been tested (doorbells, locks, baby monitors, robot vacuum cleaners, WiFi routers, alarm systems, food processors, sex toys, etc). A total of 54 vulnerabilities were detected among the devices, with 10 of the 16 tested devices affected by a vulnerability labeled to be 'of high severity' or 'critical'. The tests have found that inexpensive devices from unknown brands (often found on online platforms like AliExpress or Amazon) present an increased risk of serious security issues. However, well-known manufacturers are not off the hook: in certain cases, their devices can be just as vulnerable. From hacking attacks to the theft and abuse of personal data, the need to increase the digital security of smart products is clear.

Better rules are needed

While standing ready to help the owners of smart products to use their devices safely, Euroconsumers will also hold manufacturers to account. The organisation will strive for better rules to ensure that the devices we have in our homes are safe and secure. For instance, Euroconsumers expects the European Cybersecurity Act currently under preparation to address the identified security shortcomings of connected devices. Further EU legislation should also develop binding rules for manufacturers to ensure that the smart devices they commercialise meet minimum security requirements.

A call to manufacturers

"The results are alarming," said Els Bruggeman, Head of Policy and Enforcement at Euroconsumers. "Manufacturers must do more. This is crucial to create the consumer trust that will allow the whole Internet of Things ecosystem to flourish. If it isn't safe and secure, it isn't going to happen."

“As a consumers organisation, we stand ready to collaborate with manufacturers to make sure all smart devices are safe before they are put on the market.” added Marco Pierani, Director Public Affairs & Media Relations at Euroconsumers. “Online sales platforms should also take their responsibility and put in place procedures to detect and withdraw dangerous devices.”

Protecting consumers

Advice on how smart device users can already better protect themselves from hackers can be found on the websites of our member organisations:

Test-Achats / Test-Aankoop (Belgium):

FR: <https://www.test-achats.be/hightech/smart-home/dossier/hackable-home>

NL: <https://www.test-aankoop.be/hightech/smart-home/dossier/hackable-home>

Deco Proteste (Portugal):

<https://www.deco.proteste.pt/tecnologia/tablets-computadores/noticias/aparelhos-do-mesticos-ligados-net-podem-ser-pirateados-minutos>

Altroconsumo (Italy):

<https://www.altroconsumo.it/hi-tech/internet-telefono/news/sicurezza-dispositivi-internet-of-things>

OCU (Spain):

<https://www.ocu.org/tecnologia/antivirus/informe/estudio-ciberseguridad>

About Euroconsumers

Gathering five national consumer organisations and giving voice to a total of more than 1.5 million people, Euroconsumers is the world’s leading consumer cluster in innovative information, personalised services and defence of consumer’s rights. We work closely together with Consumers International to ensure consumers are safe, that markets are fair and benefit from honest relations with businesses and authorities. Our European member groups are also part of the umbrella network of BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation. Together, we advocate for EU policies that benefit consumers in their daily lives.

