

The Pwn Plug is a little white box that can hack your network

By WIRED

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The Pwn Plug installed during Street's May penetration test Credit: Jayson E. Street

The basic model costs \$480, but if you're willing to pay an extra \$250 for the Elite version, you can connect it over the mobile wireless network. "The whole point is plug and pwn," says Dave Porcello, Pwnie Express's CEO. "Walk into a facility, plug it in, wait for the text message. Before you even get to the parking lot you should know it's working."

Porcello decided to start making the Pwn Plug after coming across the [SheevaPlug](#), a miniature low-power Linux computer built by Globalscale Technologies that looks just like a power adapter. "I saw it and I was like, 'Oh my god this is the hacker's dropbox,'" Porcello says. Dropboxes have been around for a few decades, but until now they've been customized computers that hackers or pen testers like Street build and sneak, unobserved onto corporate networks.

Now Pwnie Express has taken the idea commercial and built a product that anyone can easily configure and use. It turns out that they're also a great way for corporations to test out security at their regional offices. Porcellos says that the Bank of America is mailing the Pwn Plug to its regional offices and having bank managers plug them into the network. Then security experts at corporate HQ can check the network for vulnerabilities.

Another Internet service provider—Porcello wasn't allowed to name it—is using the devices to remotely connect to regional offices via a GSM mobile wireless network and troubleshoot networking problems.

The device can save companies big money, Porcello says. “You’ve got companies like T.J.Maxx that have thousands of retail stores and every single one of them has got a computer network,” he says. “Right now they’re actually flying people out to the stores to spot check and do penetration basis, but now with something like this you don’t have to travel.”

Porcello was just a bored security manager at an insurance company when he started building the Pwn Plugs back in 2010. But pretty soon he was selling enough to quit his day job. “We started getting orders from Fortune 50 companies and the DoD and I was like, ‘OK I’ll do this now instead.’”

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