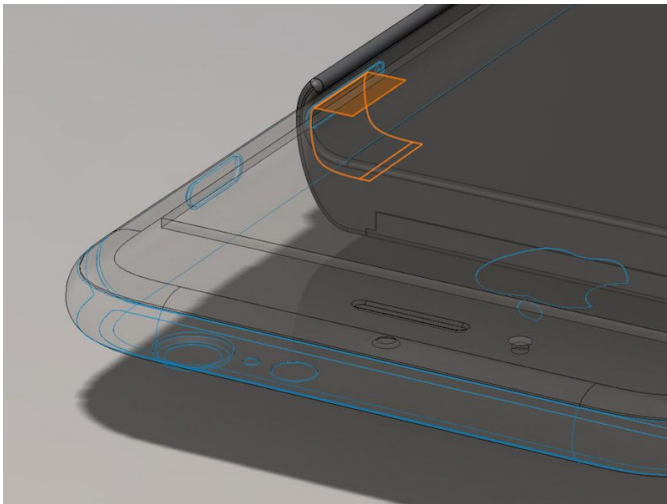


Edward Snowden Designs Surveillance-Proof iPhone Case

Written by Marco Attard
27 July 2016

NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden is continuing his anti-government surveillance work from his current exile in Russia, with a design for an iPhone case able to prevent snooping by outside parties.



Designed in collaboration with Andrew "Bunnie" Huang-- the founder of Bunnie Studios and the first person to hack the Xbox-- the iPhone case concept is described in a paper titled "Against the Law: Countering Lawful Abuses of Digital Surveillance." Primarily aimed at journalists, activists and rights workers, the case accesses the phone antennae through the SIM slot, and warns users through alarms and a small mono-colour display on the outside of the case.

Dubbed the "introspection engine," the add-on requires the SIM card to be installed in the case itself. It monitors all the radios inside the phone, including GPS, Bluetooth, wifi and cellular modem.

According to Snowden and Huang not even Airplane Mode is a defense against radio transmissions since the GPS remains active, providing a backdoor for malware packages to activate radios without indication from the UI. Or, as the two put it, "trusting a phone that has been hacked to go into Airplane Mode is like trusting a drunk person to judge if they are sober enough to drive."

The paper cites the case of American reporter Marie Colvine, who was allegedly tracked by the Assad regime in Syria through the interception of signals from her phone before killing her for covering stories about civilian casualties.

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Snowden and Huang plan to finish a working prototype of the case by 2017 before launching a Chinese supply chain of modified iPhone for use by journalists.

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