

After cable recall, Xbox's still frying

By *srlinuxx*

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14 million games console owners are still at risk of waking up to find their Xbox has become an ex-box. For when Microsoft issued a safety advisory for Xbox customers last month, it failed to address the underlying problem.

After several reports of consoles catching fire, Microsoft urged 14 million console owners to send in their old power leads for a replacement. But hardware experts point out that the power cable was never at root of the problem: it simply made the existing problem worse. The meltdown, and subsequent fire risk was actually caused by wear and tear on the power supply used in early models of the Xbox. The replacement cable featured a trip, which cut down the risk of your house catching fire, but left unfortunate gamers with a fried console. The chord has an interrupter switch that acts like a conventional fuse, tripping power to the unit.

Microsoft's decision to limit its liabilities, rather than address the root of the problem, has led to a particularly bizarre situation. Customers who don't need to participate being in the program are being shipped an identical cable to the one they've got.

Microsoft last month advised console owners to unplug the Xbox from the mains, and claimed the risk is only 1 in 10,000.

Ryan, an Xbox modder in Northern California who has disassembled the console, confirms that solder on two prongs holding the Foxlink power supply in place wear out. The problem affects versions 1.0 and 1.1 of the power supply. The design flaw was fixed in subsequent power supplies.

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