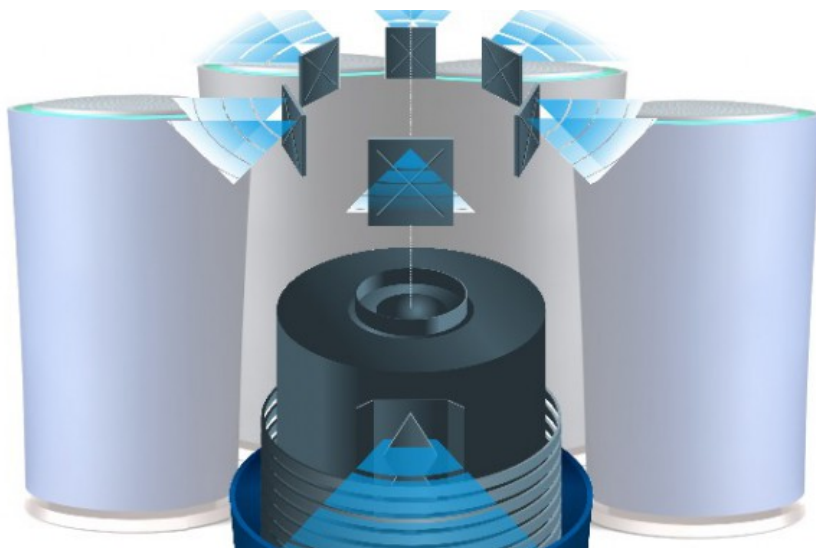


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Google's OnHub is basically a hacked Chromebook -- here's how to root it

By [Mark Wilson](#)

Published 21 hours ago

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One of Google's slightly more unusual hardware releases is the [OnHub wireless router](#). At \$200, it's a network device that some [might consider expensive](#), but at the same time its performance has impressed. A router is a router is a router, you might say, but Google's OnHub is somewhat different to the majority.

A [teardown by iFixIt](#) revealed the guts of the router, showing that it's a TP-Link device (confirming what [Google had already said](#)) with a somewhat unusual antenna design. It's an intriguing piece of hardware that Exploitee.rs has referred to as being "at heart a Chromebook without a screen modified as a router". The good news for anyone who likes to get their hands dirty with some hardware hacking? It is rootable and Exploitee.rs reveals all.

[Exploitee.rs determined](#) that in order to root the OnHub, it was going to be necessary to access Developer Mode -- just as with a Chromebook. A Raspberry Pi was used to extract the SPI flash which is used to store the OnHub's BIOS, and it was on looking at the contents of the eMMC that it was found that the images were not very far removed from those used in Chromebooks.

Being so closely related to the Chromebook meant that it was going to be easier to tackle the OnHub than just walking in blind. However, to crack the OnHub, it was necessary to access Developer Mode -- something that was achieved after the discovery of a hidden switch on the bottom of the router. It was then possible to root the device. Exploitee.rs has [full details of the hack](#) in its Wiki, and you can also check out the video below for more information:

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How To Root The Google OnHub

```
localhost ~ # cp /etc/shadow /tmp/rootb/etc/shadow
localhost ~ #
localhost ~ # sync
localhost ~ #
localhost ~ # ls -l /tmp/roota/bin/busybox
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 1937480 Jun 23 22:41 /tmp/roota/bin/busybox
localhost ~ #
localhost ~ # ls -l /tmp/rootb/bin/busybox
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root root 1937480 Jun 23 22:41 /tmp/rootb/bin/busybox
localhost ~ #
localhost ~ # sync
localhost ~ # umount /dev/mmcblk0p3
localhost ~ # umount /dev/mmcblk0p5
localhost ~ #
localhost ~ # halt
localhost ~ # Write failed: Broken pipe
max@ubuntu:~$ ping 192.168.86.1
PING 192.168.86.1 (192.168.86.1) 56(84) bytes of data:
From 192.168.86.187 icmp_seq=2 Destination Host Unreachable
```



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