

## Re: D-Link: incompetent or evil?

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On 2006-04-10, Rick Jones <[rick.jones2@xxxxxx](mailto:rick.jones2@xxxxxx)> wrote:

Has anything suggested that the D-link kit involved in this situation would stop "just working" if it never reached an NTP server?

As I read it, it's only one in a list of servers. Meaning that if it can't reach one it'll just pick another. Shutting down all is not likely to be feasible.

Thus remains the core of the problem that d-link allowed their gear to be shipped with a hard-coded list of servers that they don't own, resulting in theft of service through violating the conditions set for use. What is worse, the grief it is causing to one such server and the community it serves can not be easily remedied even if d-link made an effort to try, which they're clearly failing to even contemplate.

IANAL but if there was the muscle to force them to heel, I'd expect a choice of firmware upgrades or a recall, maybe backed by penalties to give them some incentive to get on with it. Possibly with replacement, but that is something for d-link to work out with their customers.

[snip!]

That test still requires "thinking" about the big picture.

But it doesn't require nearly as much imagining esoteric failure modes caused by chains of interdependent systems as it might seem. Using the old trick of carving out "models" and making them individually solid in design goes a long way to prevent nastiness.

One such model is making a distinction between "things we control" and "things we don't control but use anyway". You can't always avoid the latter, think of the list of root name servers, but that doesn't mean you should do so with abandon.

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Perhaps I'm reading too much into the word "test" but I think of that as something one runs against the "thing to be tested" that returns an indication of passing or failing. At least initially the pass/fail requires not expenditure of thought by a human being.

In the design stage, one has to ask "what does this depend on?". For an appliance (especially one intended to be sold by the million) that looks to other hosts on the network for certain services, ease of updating the list of possible other hosts to query is desirable. Any hardcoded lists are clearly failing the test of "can we easily change this data it depends on, when deployed?" A list of servers found by looking up, say, timepool.d-link.com would pass the same test.

I don't know what is worse: allowing the former to pass the test, or never asking the question at all. Either way, it indicates serious trouble in d-link's design process. Not to mention the glaring failure to take responsibility by d-link's management now that it has become clear d-link's actions are causing grief to other persons. Whatever their attorneys say.

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