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The Drones Club: Consumer UAVs, their (ab)uses, and some possible countermeasures

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, or “drones”) have been in consumer hands and newspaper headlines for several years now. While their much-touted potential to dramatically change modern existence is slowly beginning to emerge, it sometimes seems as if their most notable success thus far has been in crashing into everything in sight.

This talk will take a brief look at the devices currently available for the everyday consumer and what to expect in the near future. It will then explore some exciting legitimate uses as well as the manifold creative misuses people have devised. Finally it will discuss the potential countermeasures that have been proposed to detect UAVs, disable or commandeer them, and trace misuse back to operators.

Richard Baker is a member of the Centre for Doctoral Training in Cybersecurity, within the Software and Systems Security group. His DPhil work focuses on the opportunities that UAVs provide as an inexpensive mobile platform, as well as technologies to help protect privacy despite their widespread use. Prior to studying in Oxford he was a software developer for a number of years, in the UK and Switzerland. He holds an MEng degree in Computer Science from Imperial College London.

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