

## **Honey, I think the toaster's listening...**

Over the past few months, the Catt household appears to have fallen into some bizarre electrical appliance twilight zone.

It all started with the bread maker exploding (literally). Its sneaky attempt at giving me a heart attack whilst I had my back turned cleaning the sink, thankfully failed. However, the loud bang caused me to jump, resulting in a jet of orange scented cream cleaner hitting a large and rather spiteful cactus on the windowsill.

Sean's handy tip #1: Never attempt to remove household cleaning products from a cactus with inch long thorns without first donning gloves borrowed from a suit of medieval amour.

Hot on the heels of the bread maker's demise, the oven decided it couldn't be bothered anymore to heat food up above tepid or lukewarm at best. Needless to say, the kitchen now boasts a nice new shiny oven, whilst my credit card is currently recovering in a cool, dark room.

A previously well-behaved washing machine now sounds like a space rocket taking off whilst on its spin cycle. I can hear it from my study with both the kitchen and study doors closed. The repairman, after the obligatory sharp intake of breath and much tutting, advised running it until the drum launches itself out the front in an attempt to complete its space rocket impression, then to go out and buy a new one.

Finally, last week, in a scene Norman Bates and his mother would have been proud of, I had to hack at the DVD player drawer repeatedly with a knife in order to retrieve my X Files disc.

Two appliances shuffling off the mortal coil within such a short period I can accept as coincidence. But four is an out and out conspiracy. And I'm afraid I only see things getting worse as the 'Internet of Things' takes over our lives, allowing all these connected devices to conspire against us.

TV's, DVD players, satellite boxes, games consoles and the like have been connected to the internet for a good while. But now we can control our central heating and lighting from our phones, washing machines can cheerfully text you at work saying they're just about to turn all your whites pink due to the one red sock you missed from the previous wash. Even refrigerators can taunt you that your frozen peas are turning into mushy peas as you sit in a traffic jam during the commute home.

And how long will we have to wait until we see tabloid headlines like this?

*Anonymous hack Prime Minister's toilet!*  
*WikiLeaks release details of PM's ablutions online*  
*Downing Street say MI5 determined to get to the bottom of the matter!*

I must go and find my tinfoil hat now as I need to refill the coffee percolator, which I am convinced, gave me a funny look earlier.

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