“Cache issue” causes Xiaomi cameras to show other people’s camera feeds

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- Xiaomi’s two home security cameras.
- Someone else’s sleeping baby. The camera feeds all show weird distortion, missing data, and incorrect cropping like this.
- Sometimes the images are very distorted.
- “Baaaang!” I guess this is someone’s office.
- A checkout counter?

Chinese electronics maker Xiaomi has shut down the Google Home Hub integration of its security cameras after a cache issue caused some of Xiaomi’s camera streams to go to the wrong people. The bug was first reported by Reddit user Dio-V, with a post titled “When I load the Xiaomi camera in my Google home hub I get stills from other people’s homes!!”

Dio-V posted a video showing that pressing the “camera” button on a Google Home paired with a Xiaomi camera would, after a long wait, show a corrupted, distorted image. Dio-V says this feed isn’t from one of their cameras. The user also posted several stills from other random camera feeds that would pop up on his smart display.

After the reddit post, the story was picked up by Android Police, and Google quickly shut down the integration. Google told the site: “We’re aware of the issue and are in contact with Xiaomi to work on a fix. In the meantime, we’re disabling Xiaomi integrations on our devices.”

In the US, reports typically refer to Xiaomi as a Chinese smartphone manufacturer that makes wild designs that never come to the US, but over the years Xiaomi has turned into a more general electronics maker. The company’s two security cameras, called “Mi Home Security Cameras” or “Xiaomi Mijia” are sold at Amazon and Walmart and start at $40. The cameras are Xiaomi’s version of a Dropcam (or, I guess, Nest Cam, now), offering Wi-Fi connectivity and easy-to-use iOS and Android apps for remote monitoring. There’s also integration with the Google Home Hub smart display, which can display remote video feeds.

Xiaomi gave a statement to Engadget, saying, “We are aware there was an issue of receiving stills while connecting Mi Home Security Camera Basic 1080p on Google Home hub. We apologize for the inconvenience this has caused to our users.” Xiaomi says the issue “was caused by a cache update on December 26, 2019, which was designed to improve camera streaming quality.”

The bug was apparently due to the camera’s integration with the Google Home Hub and could pop up under “poor network conditions,” which explains the long load times in the video. Xiaomi said: “We have also found 1,044 users were with such integrations and only a few with extremely poor network conditions might be affected.” Xiaomi closed the statement saying, “Xiaomi has communicated and fixed this issue with Google, and has also suspended this service until the root cause has been completely solved, to ensure that such issues will not happen again.”

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