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Programmer's USB Cable Can Kill Laptop If Machine is Yanked Away

The solution is designed to act as a kill switch if a thief ever tries to steal your laptop in a public place. The software engineer Michael Altfield published a blog post on how to create the USB 'kill cord' for only \$20.

By [Michael Kan](#) January 2, 2020



Imagine you're at a coffee shop, and then someone steals your laptop right when you're looking away. It's a rare, but scary scenario. And because our laptops contain so much sensitive information, it means the thief could have access to your entire digital life.

Device encryption provides one solution. But what happens if you've already logged in, and your laptop's lid is open? Well, a San Francisco-based computer programmer has come up with a potential solution. On Thursday, Michael Altfield published a blog post on how Linux laptop owners can build a \$20 killswitch to automatically shut down their machine if it's ever yanked away from them.

His solution, dubbed "BusKill," is actually pretty straightforward. On a Linux laptop, you can add a rule on the software's device manager to trigger an action anytime a USB drive is removed. The same rule, which is only a few lines of computer code, can also be calibrated to work on a specific USB stick.



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