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Windows XP ATM Machine “Hacked” by Simply Pressing Shift Five Times in a Row

We’ve known for a while that ATM machines running Windows XP (Embedded version or not) are exposed to attacks, but when we mix the lack of updates with bad configuration from IT admins what we get is a vulnerability that’s worryingly easy to exploit. One of the users of Russian blogging platform Habrahabr discovered that an ATM machine operated by state-owned bank Sberbank runs Windows XP and suffers from a security hole that makes it possible for pretty much anyone to completely hack it.

While it’s not hard to figure out what hacking of an ATM machine means, it appears that the full-screen lock system that prevented the ATM interface from accessing other parts of the operating system could be bypassed by simply invoking Sticky Keys. This is a feature that’s part of Windows XP and which can be easily enabled by pressing Shift for five times in a row, in its turn providing access to Windows settings and bringing up the taskbar and the Start menu. While this isn’t an issue related to Windows XP no longer receiving security updates, it’s also worrying that there still are many banks out there running the operating system launched in 2001.

For what it’s worth, the last updates for Windows XP were shipped in April 2014 (except for one emergency patch blocking the WannaCry ransomware released earlier this year).