

Maker Says

This neat little board adds a programmable power switch to your Raspberry Pi
Nanomesher



RASPBERRY PI POWER SWITCH

Rob Zwetsloot looks at a simple, functional addition to the Raspberry Pi that goes the extra mile

One of the things we always hear about concerning the Raspberry Pi is that a lot of people would like it to have a power switch of some kind. There are a few solutions for this you can try, ranging from a simple USB switch to custom, soldered-on buttons. This Raspberry Pi Power Switch is a little different, though.

At least it *can* be different – out of the box you get a little circuit board that connects to the Raspberry Pi GPIO, and also acts as a bridge to the USB power. You can then use it with the remote it comes with, along with some extra code you need to install yourself, to remotely power your Pi on and off with a press of a button. Nice and simple, and exactly what most people want. It's small as well, so should slip into most projects.

The real magic of the board comes from the programmable ATtiny MCU controller. It's a completely hackable chip that sits on the Power Switch board but can be removed and reprogrammed to provide other functionality with the remote.

The catch is that you need to reprogram it via an Arduino-compatible platform like an Uno. If you pay a bit more, you can get these Arduino devices with the switch if you don't already own one, but you'll need to wire it up yourself to the Arduino with a breadboard.

You can hack it to recognise more signals from the included remote (or indeed any compatible remote), and even change the timings and function of the shutdown. Want a button in case you need to do a hard reset? You can add that by hacking

the chip and then replacing it on the board. Very simple.

We like the design of the board, but we feel it would function better as some form of HAT, even if just as an optional way to attach it to the Raspberry Pi. Otherwise, the Power Switch works well enough and does the job of being able to turn the Pi on or off safely.

Last word

Going beyond what you'd expect of a typical on/off switch by making it hackable is a very novel idea. However, we feel like there could be some minor improvements to its connectivity.



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PI SUPPLY SWITCH

A similar bit of tech allows you to smartly turn on and off a Pi without it just being a hard power cut, although this one lacks a remote.



£15 / \$20

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