

# Spy Agencies Are Doing WHAT? “The Government is Spying on Essentially Everything We Do

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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## New Revelations Are Breaking Every Day

Revelations about the breathtaking scope of government spying are coming so fast that it's time for an updated roundup:

- The government is spying on essentially [everything we do](#). It is [not just “metadata”](#) ... although that is [enough to destroy your privacy](#)
- The government has adopted a secret interpretation of the Patriot Act which allows it to [pretend that “everything” is relevant ... so it spies on everyone](#). For example, the NSA “oversight” court believes the [mere claim that terrorists use the phone system is enough to show that all phone records are relevant](#)
- NSA whistleblowers say that the NSA collects all of our conversations [word-for-word](#)
- It's not just the NSA ... [Many other agencies, like the FBI and IRS – concerned only with domestic issues](#) – spy on Americans as well. The Drug Enforcement Administration has had direct access to AT&T phone records for [25 years](#)
- The information gained through spying is [shared with federal, state and local agencies](#), and they are using that information to prosecute [petty crimes such as drugs and taxes](#). The agencies are instructed to [intentionally “launder”](#) the information gained through spying, i.e. to pretend that they got the information in a more legitimate way ... and to [hide that from defense attorneys and judges](#)
- The Department of Health and Human Services will also have access to [vast quantities of sensitive federal data on Americans](#) as part of Obamacare (here's the underlying Government Accountability Office [report](#))
- The NSA not only shares our information with other *American* agencies, it also gives personal, sensitive unfiltered information on Americans' [to Israel](#) and other *foreign countries*
- And it's not only governments. *Private* [contractors](#) can also view all of your data (and the government [isn't keeping track of which contractors see your data and](#)

[which don't](#)). And because [background checks regarding some contractors are falsified](#), it is hard to know the types of people that might have your information. And because private contractors are involved in spying on behalf of governments [world-wide](#), it's hard to know who might get their hands on your data

- It's not just your computer and your phone. It is well-documented that the government may be spying on us through [cars and buses, streetlights, at airports and on the street, via mobile scanners and drones, through our smart meters](#), and in many other ways
- [Top counter-terror experts say that the government's mass spying doesn't keep us safe](#)
- Indeed, they say that mass spying [actually hurts U.S. counter-terror efforts](#). And [see this](#)
- They say we can, instead, [keep everyone safe without violating the Constitution ... more cheaply and efficiently than the current system](#)
- There is *no real oversight* by [Congress](#), [the courts](#), or [the executive branch](#) of government. And see [this](#) and [this](#).
- Indeed, most [Congress members had no idea what the NSA is doing](#). Even staunch defenders of the NSA - and [congress members on the intelligence oversight committees](#) - now say [they've been kept in the dark](#)
- A Federal judge who was on the secret spying court for 3 years [says that it's a kangaroo court](#)
- Even the *current* judges on the secret spying court now admit that [they're out of the loop and powerless to exercise real oversight](#).
- When these judges raised concerns about NSA spying, the Justice Department [totally ignored them](#)
- A former U.S. *president* says that the spying program shows that we [no longer have a functioning democracy](#)
- The chairs of the 9/11 Commission say that [NSA spying has gone way too far](#)
- Top constitutional experts say that Obama and Bush are [worse than Nixon](#) ... and the [Stasi East Germans](#)
- While the government initially claimed that mass surveillance on Americans prevented more than 50 terror attacks, the NSA's deputy director John Inglis walked that position back all the way to saying that - [at the most - one \(1\) plot might have been disrupted](#) by the bulk phone records collection alone. In other

words, the NSA can't prove that stopped any terror attacks. The government [greatly exaggerated](#) an alleged recent terror plot for political purposes ([and promoted the fearmongering of serial liars](#)). The argument that recent terror warnings show that NSA spying is necessary is so weak that American counter-terrorism experts have slammed it as ["crazy pants"](#)

- You're much more likely to be killed by [brain-eating amoeba, lightning or a toddler](#) than by terrorism. Even President Obama admits that [you're much less likely to be killed by terrorists than a car accident](#). So the government has resorted to [lamer and lamer excuses](#) to try to justify mass surveillance
- Experts say that [the spying program is illegal](#), and is *exactly* the kind of thing which [King George imposed on the American colonists ... which led to the Revolutionary War](#)
- Harvard law school professor – and director of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University – (Yochai Benkler) [says](#):

"We have learned that in pursuit of its bureaucratic mission to obtain signals intelligence in a pervasively networked world, the NSA has mounted a systematic campaign against the foundations of American power: constitutional checks and balances, technological leadership, and market entrepreneurship. The NSA scandal is no longer about privacy, or a particular violation of constitutional or legislative obligations. The American body politic is suffering a severe case of auto-immune disease: our defense system is attacking other critical systems of our body".

- The top counter-terrorism Czar under Clinton and Bush says that [revealing NSA spying programs does not harm national security](#)
- [The feds are considering prosecuting](#) the owner of a private email company – who shut down his business rather than turning over records to the NSA – for refusing to fork over the information and keep quiet. This is a little like trying to throw someone in jail because he's died and is no longer paying taxes
- Whistleblowers on illegal spying have *no "legal" way* to get the information out
- There are indications that the government isn't just passively gathering the information ... but is [actively using it for mischievous purposes](#)
- [Spying](#) started [before 9/11](#) ... and [various excuses have been used to spy on Americans over the years](#)
- Governments and big corporations are doing everything they can [to destroy anonymity](#)
- Mass spying [creates an easy mark for hackers](#). Indeed, the [Pentagon now sees](#) the collection of "big data" as a "national security threat" ... but the NSA is the biggest data collector on the planet, and thus provides a tempting mother lode

of information for foreign hackers

- Mass surveillance by the NSA [directly harms internet companies, Silicon Valley, California ... and the entire U.S. economy](#). For example, Facebook lost [11 millions users](#) as of April mainly due to privacy concerns (and that was *before* the Snowden revelations). And see these reports from [Boingboing](#) and the [Guardian](#)
- [IT](#) and [security](#) professionals are *quite concerned* about government spying
- Some people [make a lot of money](#) off of mass spying. But the government *isn't* using the spying program to stop the [worst types of lawlessness](#)
- The NSA spying program is unambiguously being used for industrial espionage, by spying on [large foreign corporations](#), and the biggest [financial payments systems](#) such as VISA and Swift (Europe is not amused). Indeed, in a slide leaked by Edward Snowden, ["economic" was one of the main justifications](#) for spying
- The top U.S. spy's justifications for such financial spying is [not very reassuring](#):

"We collect this information for many important reasons: for one, it could provide the United States and our allies early warning of international financial crises which could negatively impact the global economy. It also could provide insight into other countries' economic policy or behavior which could affect global markets."

- Top financial experts say that the NSA and other intelligence agencies are using the information to [profit from this inside information](#)
- The Wall Street Journal reported that the NSA spies on Americans' [credit card transactions](#). Many other agencies are [doing the same](#). In fact, virtually *all* U.S. intelligence agencies - including the CIA and NSA - [are going to spy on Americans' finances](#). The [IRS](#) will also be spying on Americans' [shopping records, travel, social interactions, health records and files](#) from other government investigators.
- Polls show that the public [doesn't believe the NSA](#) ... and thinks that the government has [gone way too far](#) in the name of terrorism
- While leaker Edward Snowden is treated as a traitor by the fatcats and elites, he is [considered a hero by the American public](#). Members of the [Executive, Legislative and Judicial](#) branches of government have all *praised* the debate on spying which Snowden's leaks started
- The heads of the intelligence services have [repeatedly been caught lying](#) about spying. And even liberal publications are starting to say that [Obama has been intentionally lying about spying](#). The government claimed that most spying

programs ended in 2011, when – in fact – they were [expanded that year](#)

- Obama says he'll rein in spying ... but his [words and deeds](#) indicate that he won't. Indeed, Obama [appointed the fox](#) to [guard the chicken coop](#). No wonder [only 11%](#) of Americans trust Obama to actually do anything to rein in spying.
- A huge majority of Americans wants the director of intelligence – Clapper – [prosecuted for perjury](#). One of the chairs of the 9/11 Commission [agrees](#)
- While the Obama administration is spying on everyone in the country – it is at the same time the [most secretive](#) administration [ever](#) ([background](#)). That's despite Obama saying he's running [the most transparent administration ever](#)
- The NSA feels contempt and scorn for the American people. For example, Spiegel [notes](#):

“The authors of the [NSA slides] draw a comparison with “1984,” ... revealing the agency's current view of smartphones and their users. “Who knew in 1984 that this would be Big Brother ...” the authors ask, in reference to a photo of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs. And commenting on photos of enthusiastic Apple customers and iPhone users, the NSA writes: “... and the zombies would be paying customers?”

- Worse, the intelligence agencies often view normal, true-blue American free speech activities as [potential terrorism](#) (and [see this](#))
- A Congressman noted that – even if a mass surveillance program is *started* for good purposes – it will inevitably [turn into a witch hunt](#)
- There are indications that the spy agencies aren't just passively gathering information, but are [actively using it](#) in mischievous ways
- Surveillance can be used to [frame you if someone in government happens to take a dislike to you](#)
- Government spying has [always focused on crushing dissent ... not on keeping us safe](#)
- An NSA whistleblower says that [the NSA is spying on – and blackmailing – top government officials and military officers](#) (and [see this](#))
- High-level US government officials have [warned for 40 years that mass surveillance would lead to tyranny in America](#)
- A top NSA whistleblower says that the only way to fix things is to [fire all of the corrupt government officials who let it happen](#). As the polls above show, the American public is starting to wake up to that fact

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