

The NSA is Building the Foundation for a Global Police State

NSA spying is just the beginning, a far greater threat lies ahead

By [Eric Sommer](#)

Global Research, December 31, 2013

[RT Op-Edge](#)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

The US National Security Agency (NSA) is building the foundation for a global police state. This is not an exaggeration.

The lynch pin of the NSA system is the continuous gathering of all types of digital data on political leaders, economic institutions, and hundreds of millions of people around the world. Despite the recent revelations, the political leaders of the US government have never stated that such activities will stop.

However, the current massive cyber surveillance of the worlds' people and institutions is only the beginning of the threat from the NSA and its allied US government agencies. Unrestricted information technology (IT) power in the hands of the US government is a future threat which dwarfs anything the NSA has done to date.



AFP Photo / Paul J. Richards

Moore's law, a prediction originally formulated by Intel co-founder Gordon Moore, states that microchips double in power and halve in price per unit power every two years. In the 47 years since this prediction appeared, it has always been validated, and experts expect this trajectory to continue for the foreseeable future.

By simple arithmetic of the 2x2x2x2 variety, we can see that ten years from now, chip power will be 32 times greater than today. The capabilities of a wide range of digital devices will also improve exponentially, as processing speed, memory capacity, sensors, and miniaturization are all linked to Moore's law.

This upward leap will have massive negative consequences if the US government is permitted to retain its current 'blank check' on the use - and manipulation - of IT.

To begin with, the power to gather - and to automate - the scanning and manipulation of...the worlds data will grow exponentially. The NSA has already anticipated this development by constructing a gigantic new center in the US state of Utah. Finished at the end of 2013, it will house unimaginable amounts of data - amounts far greater than any it has so far gathered, at an estimated cost for construction plus hardware and software of 3.5 to 4 billion US dollars.

Second, the power of the NSA - and of other US government entities - to instantly control or

kill anyone or any institution anywhere in the world will also grow exponentially. IT-controlled pilot-less drone airplanes, currently used by the US government to murder people thousands of miles away in a number of countries, are but a small harbinger of what will be possible.



AFP Photo / Mario Tama

One important development is what IT people call *'the internet of things,'* something which is already under construction. The idea is to incorporate into the world network a large proportion of the inanimate objects which surround us. Grocery store products, appliances, vehicles, buildings, highways, factory systems, and machines, and more are all being added - or will be added - in various ways to the network. Many of these things, of course, already contain computer chips, and some are already networked.

Building backdoors and hacking - methods beloved by the NSA - into the chips, software, and network connections of this *'world of things'* would turn everyday objects into potential drones.

Imagine, for example, a foreign government official is disliked by the US government - or just by the NSA. Or perhaps someone in the US posts something on the internet that the government really dislikes. Suddenly, that person is attacked by their toaster. Or they mysteriously lose control of their car. Or the airplane they're flying in crashes. Or the friendly house-cleaning robot they recently bought suddenly turns mean.

On a larger scale, the same kinds of methods can be used to disrupt or put out of action a foreign country's military systems, government systems, or economic enterprises.

What's more, there is every possibility that the NSA or similar agencies will attempt to infiltrate their spying, and potential for disruption, into the emerging realm of augmented reality technologies. Augmented reality involves looking at a real-world environment

through an IT-enhanced pair of glasses – glasses which simultaneously display the real world and some digital content such as images, pictures, text, video, or whatever. Moreover, these glasses are connected wirelessly to the internet, so the augmented realities can be shared.

To cite a very simple example, you might be looking at a real world table, but seeing flowers on the table that aren't there. And you might be seeing and talking to people at the table who are actually in another place.

This isn't science fiction; it's on the way in various forms to widespread commercial availability in the next year or so from multiple IT companies – including Google, and several dozens more. Some experts believe that functions now done on computers, mobile phones, and other IT systems currently in use will ultimately 'collapse' into, or be absorbed into, this new technology.



AFP Photo / Hoang Dinh Nam

As wonderful as it may prove to be, augmented reality technology is also not without dangers. Bear in mind the recent revelation that the NSA has already infiltrated false 'avatars' and engaged in other covert activity in World of Warcraft and Second Life, two of the most popular multi-player computer game systems, in which users immerse into a 'virtual world.' Such games are used by millions of people around the world.

Information technology – powered by Moore's law – is, in fact, moving progressively closer to the human brain. From the post-WWII mainframe computers, to desktop computers, to

notebooks and tablets, to smartphones, to augmented reality glasses.

What's next? The logical step beyond the glasses is apt to be something like augmented reality operating through contact lenses, followed after that by augmented reality operating through actual visual and auditory implants behind the eyes and ears, thereby creating real world '*augmented humans.*' Such technology might greatly increase the capabilities and even intelligence of users. But it also has a dystopian potential for unprecedented state spying and interference.

Under ever-worsening life conditions for the American people, there is a real danger that IT-enabled '*security*' - whether called the '*NSA*' or something else - will increasingly be used for more illegal and unconstitutional surveillance and control of the population. Only a determined effort now to rein in the NSA - and the massive use of IT for so-called '*security*' purposes - can help prevent this potential tragedy.

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