

Privacy and the Government

Lecture 6-2

Computers & Society (CPSC 430)

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Snowden and the NSA Scandal

- In Fall 2013, it emerged that the NSA was engaged in a very wide range of wiretapping

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_surveillance_disclosures_\(2013%E2%80%93present\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_surveillance_disclosures_(2013%E2%80%93present))

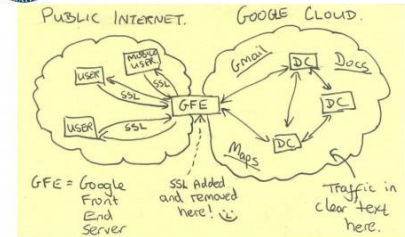


- **Washington Post summary of the leaks:**
 - Taken together, the revelations have brought to light a global surveillance system that cast off many of its historical restraints after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Secret legal authorities empowered the NSA to sweep in the telephone, Internet and location records of whole populations.

TOP SECRET//SI//NOFORN



Current Efforts - Google



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Xkeyscore

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XKeyscore>

“What could you do if you would use XKeyscore?” Snowden:

- You could read anyone's email in the world, anybody you've got an email address for. Any website: You can watch traffic to and from it. Any computer that an individual sits at: You can watch it. Any laptop that you're tracking: you can follow it as it moves from place to place throughout the world. It's a one-stop-shop for access to the NSA's information. ... You can tag individuals ... Let's say you work at a major German corporation and I want access to that network, I can track your username on a website on a form somewhere, I can track your real name, I can track associations with your friends and I can build what's called a fingerprint, which is network activity unique to you, which means anywhere you go in the world, anywhere you try to sort of hide your online presence, your identity.*

Greenwald: low-level NSA analysts can, via systems like Xkeyscore:

- “listen to whatever emails they want, whatever telephone calls, browsing histories, Microsoft Word documents. And it's all done with no need to go to a court, with no need to even get supervisor approval on the part of the analyst.”*
- analysis can listen "to the calls or read the emails of everything that the NSA has stored, or look at the browsing histories or Google search terms that you've entered, and it also alerts them to any further activity that people connected to that email address or that IP address do in the future".*

Discussion

Do you think Snowden behaved unethically?

What do you think about wiretapping more broadly?