

CDT Statement on Continuing Revelations About NSA Mass Surveillance

June 6, 2013

Washington - Yesterday's revelation that the FBI has been using the PATRIOT Act for the past seven years to demand the mass disclosure of millions of Americans' telephone call records to the National Security Agency was just the start. Today, an NSA [slide show](#) [1] came to light that depicts an Internet surveillance program—code-named "PRISM"—involving access to private communications stored on the servers of major Internet companies like Microsoft, Google, and Facebook. Meanwhile, *The Wall Street Journal* is now [reporting](#) [2] that the NSA's collection of records involves not only Verizon but other major telephone carriers, ISPs, and credit card companies.

"In the face of this avalanche of frightening revelations about the breadth of the NSA's surveillance programs, one thing is clear: It's time for a reckoning. The American people should not have to play guessing games about whether and how their own government is monitoring them," said CDT President Leslie Harris. "Just like the Church Committee that was convened after the revelations of illegal spying in the 1970s, we need a sustained investigation into how far these programs reach into the private lives of American citizens."

"Many lawmakers, like Senators Wyden and Udall, warned that the Executive Branch's interpretations of the PATRIOT Act and the FISA Amendments Act were dangerously broad. Now we know just how right they were, and just how badly Congress needs to reform those laws," said CDT Senior Counsel Greg Nojeim. "The 2008 FISA amendments were renewed last December based on the claim that the surveillance targeted people reasonably believed to be abroad. Today, we learned that the NSA thinks that a 51% chance of 'foreignness' meets that test. That means privacy in the U.S. turns roughly on the odds of winning a coin flip."

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