# Investigating communications

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

* The Home Secretary should be able to issue a warrant to allow police to examine the contents of letters or communications on the grounds of national security, or for preventing or detecting crime, preventing disorder, maintaining public safety, protecting public health, or in the interest of economic well-being of the country.

I think this should be allowed because the letters or communications could have significant information within them that could be used to help the police catch a criminal or as evidence. However, only if they have reason to be suspicious of the sender. Otherwise, they should not examine letters which pose no threat to public security at all, as it could contain some really personal details which the sender wishes nobody to know about.

* The police, intelligence services, HM Revenue and Customs (and other public bodies, including local authorities and a range of regulators) should be able to demand that telephone, internet and postal service providers provide detailed records of the communications of individual users.

I completely disagree with this because generally said individual users are normal people going about their daily lives when they communicate with other people, so these companies should not be able to listen to every phone call, or view the network history of users, as these things can range from not private to very private, like a call to the doctors, or using the internet to purchase items using credit cards. However, the police should be able to view an individual’s internet usage if they have reason to believe they are violating the internet laws.

* The government should be able to demand that someone hands over encryption keys to protected information. It should be a criminal offence to refuse to supply actual encrypted traffic or refuse to disclose an encryption key.

They should be able to if the encrypted traffic is believed to be a threat to national security or breaking the law, but people should be allowed to refuse if there is no evidence that the encryption contains anything bad.

* The government should be able to demand that an ISP provides secret access to a customer's communication (e.g. email, online messages, forum postings, blog postings).

They should not be able to because a customer would be a normal person, not committing any crimes, who could be posting about personal issues which they only want a select few people to know about. The government being able to view this would be a violation of people’s privacy. The exception should be suspected social media stalkers, in order to prove they are offenders and arrest them.

Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/libertycentral/2009/jan/14/regulation-investigatory-powers-act>