

I'm starting to think that the government is overstepping its bounds.

I'm not really sure if I'm allowed to think that. There's no reason to believe that sedition of this sort will even be legal in a few years... or months. The United States is becoming a monster that we've read of in science fiction novels over and over. The problem is that if we don't get off our fat asses and do something about it, we're not even going to notice that anything has changed. I grew up learning in my Social Studies classes that our government was immune from the temptations of oppression to which so many other states had fallen victim. Our systems of checks and balances will make it impossible for the government to rule unregulated over its people. We have an immutable core set of values written in plain text in our constitution. We are not an oppressed people.

Yesterday, a news report was released that stated that a document from the National Security Agency was released that outlined procedures for monitoring communications of US citizens. Anything sent over the Internet or said over the telephone might very well be stored on a datacenter located in the United States.

I already knew this. It was obvious; the Internet is delivered in plaintext most of the time. When I communicate, I assume that logs are kept by my own computer, the person with whom I'm communicating, the service I'm using to communicate, my Internet Service Provider, the Internet Service Provider of the person with whom I'm communicating, and the governments of the areas that both of us reside in. I'm also open to believing that there are others monitoring the communication. Unless I understand *very well* the technology and protocols that I'm using to communicate, I never assume that my communications are encrypted.

Something that's rather worrying, however, is that the government has unrestricted access to the logs and data that online services keep. Skype, for example, encrypts data before sending it to Skype's servers, and then encrypts it before sending it to the recipient. It is decrypted on the server, though, and it is reasonable to assume that Skype keeps local logs of many communications. The worrying aspect here is that the government is allowed to view this information without special permission from Skype, and *Skype isn't even allowed to tell the public that this is happening*.

I was annoyed, but neither surprised nor disturbed when I discovered the news yesterday. I already use encryption protocols like RSA when I need to speak securely with people, and keys are often exchanged in a guaranteeably secure manner. I am not über-paranoid about this sort of thing, but my life certainly wouldn't be ruined if my ISP or the government logged everything that passed through my network.

Today, a report was released that stated that the Obama administration has abruptly ended two trials being held by California federal courts, one against the administration and one against the National Security Agency. That's the part that scares me. The administration has claimed that the trials would involve government secrets that should not be revealed, and so it is justified in preventing these cases from being heard.

There goes the whole "checks and balances" thing that we love to profess. I have no reason to believe that the government is here for the people anymore. I suppose the only solution left is rebellion. I'm going to stop writing now, though, because I'm typing this on Google Docs and the US government has unrestricted access to all of the documents posted here.