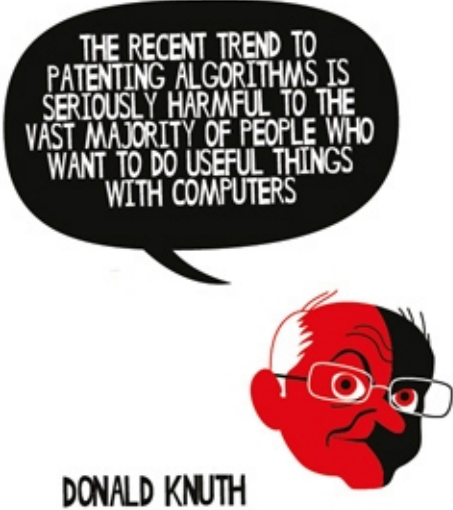


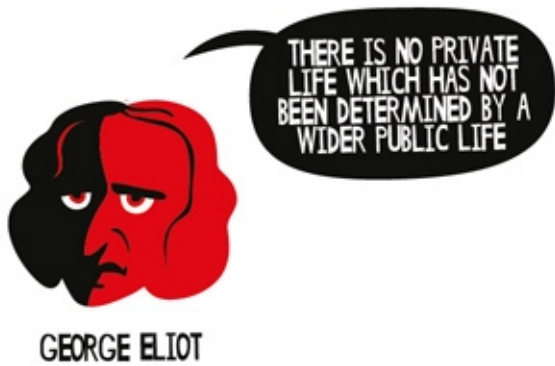
WHAT IT MEANS TO **OWN**
SOMETHING



WHAT IT MEANS TO **SHARE**
SOMETHING



WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE A
PRIVATE LIFE AT ALL



When time is short, as it always is in a crisis, there is no time for niceties. One way government can abuse its power, therefore, is to drag out any crisis. It can routinise its emergency decision-making and extend the reach of its coercive powers to cover more and more everyday transactions. In this, the new technology has proved an invaluable resource. It has made it much easier for government to oversee what people and institutions are up to in order to check that they are not posing an unacceptable risk. Government can now spy on us in all sorts of exciting new ways: read our emails, listen to our phone calls, track our text messages, access our bank accounts. Government being government, it often does this inefficiently and cack-handedly, which only makes it more frightening.

The revelation that the US government has been routinely conducting electronic surveillance on its own citizens has caused deep disquiet. Among the people who have been most disturbed are members of the tech industry. Their unease is twofold: first, techies don't like being spied on; second, they don't like not being able to prevent it. After all, it's their technology that's being abused. This puts the giants of the tech industry in a bind. They have to admit their complicity – we could have stopped it, but we didn't – or they have to admit their powerlessness – we couldn't have stopped it even if we had wanted to. Either way, it makes them look like pawns of the state.

No one likes to see politicians using technology as an instrument of control, least of all the people who invented the technology. But we