Is there a line between security and freedom? Or is there a gray area? It is up to us as American citizens to draw this red line that we shall not allow to be crossed. But in order to draw this line, we must be aware and informed of current issues and be able to form our own opinions. Being informed is not just a responsibility, which should be done, but a duty, which *must* be done. “A well-instructed people can alone be a permanently free people.” – James Madison. We must be, at the least, knowledgeable of the very documents and ideas this great nation was founded upon: The Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence. We must be made aware of what our rights and freedoms are, and what the government can and cannot do. “In questions of power, then, let no more be heard of any confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution.” – Thomas Jefferson.

The Amendments to the Constitution are statements that limit the government’s power over its people. One of the most important is the Fourth Amendment, which protects the American people from unreasonable searches and seizures without probable cause or warrant. U.S. government decision surveillance and data gathering should be measured against this standard before any action is taken. Measured against this standard, many of the federal government’s acts (under the guise of “national security”) are unconstitutional. Freedom and national security should also mean protection against unreasonable searches, surveillance and data mining.

National security is and always has been an important issue. Throughout our nation’s history, we have never been truly safe. We hope that by giving the government more power, we would keep ourselves safe, or even for them to protect us. However, trillions of dollars later, we have but an overbearing, nosy government that fails to keep track of even the Boston bombers. No amount of power can keep you truly safe; likewise, there is no perfect defense in computers. Yes, our government may mean well; who could sit back and watch accidents that could have been prevented? “There are men in all ages who mean to govern well, *but they mean to govern*. They promise to be good masters, but *they mean to be masters*.” – Daniel Webster.

Here the government is, anonymously and secretly collecting information about its citizens, to protect us. However, they do not always wait for warrants, or even for probable cause; they come after information *because they can.* People should at least be informed of what information the government shall collect. People should know their web history will be tracked, and certain phone call indexes looked into. But the privacy of a home should reign supreme. Should the government have the ability to watch you inside your own home? It is paramount that we defend the Fourth Amendment, protect the privacy of our homes, and live by the liberties that our forefathers fought so hard to secure.