**Case: Edward Snowden's release of Top-Secret information about National Security Administration security and surveillance practices**

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| Ethical Quandary | Governments and relationships between them | Big Tech | Public | Software Engineering (Profession) |
| Hero vs Criminal | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |
| Spying malware vs Protection of citizens |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| Keeping company’s data private vs Doing a public service (Employee vs Employer) |  |  |  | ✓ |

Edward Snowden’s case was primary a reputational hit for the NSA and the U.S. government in general. In the heart of the conflict, we have the leaked information about Security Agency’s program that allows them to intrude into most popular devices, thus allowing government to spy on people. It doesn’t take a lawyer to figure out that this goes against human rights and threatens the privacy of American citizens. I have defined this ethical dilemma as “Spying malware vs Protection of citizens” – obviously, NSA’s biggest argument would be that the spying was there to stop criminals before they’d even have a chance to act. Even if they had provided enough evidence (which, to my knowledge, they hadn’t) that proved the efficiency of spying on solving such cases, I have my doubts that regular citizens would voluntarily agree to give up their privacy without even knowing it. Apart from public opinion on the government, this has also shifted public’s opinion about the major tech companies that allowed these backdoors to exist. I am not putting a checkmark under Government for this section because I am not convinced that this case, in the long run, has changed their approach and treatment of citizens’ privacy. However, I do feel like it has forced companies like Apple or Google to be at least a little more transparent about how they handle their users’ data. Another important point is how Snowden is perceived: while many people think of him as a national hero, the government, obviously, gives him accusations and is trying to put him in jail. They can’t though, becuase Edward Snowden had fled to Russia – a country who hasn’t been in good relationships with United States, to say the least. This case has affected their relations even more by making them play for opposite teams where one is helping the public hero to hide from the other. Another public dilemma that I thought was present was “Keeping company’s data private vs Doing a public service”. This one is different from Hero vs Criminal since it refers less to Edward Snowden’s persona to software engineers in general. This case became a standard for showing that employees have this option of sacrificing their company’s “Top Secret” data if it can affect the lives of a significant number of people.

To sum up, this case was mostly a reputational hit for the government and the NSA. From my understanding, many people view Edward Snowden as a hero which shows that his decision to sacrifice everything and show people the truth was not pointless. While one can argue that Snowden did not act ethical by leaking an important piece of information owned by his employer, I think that the unethical actions that this intel has revealed overweighs Snowden’s “illegal” actions.