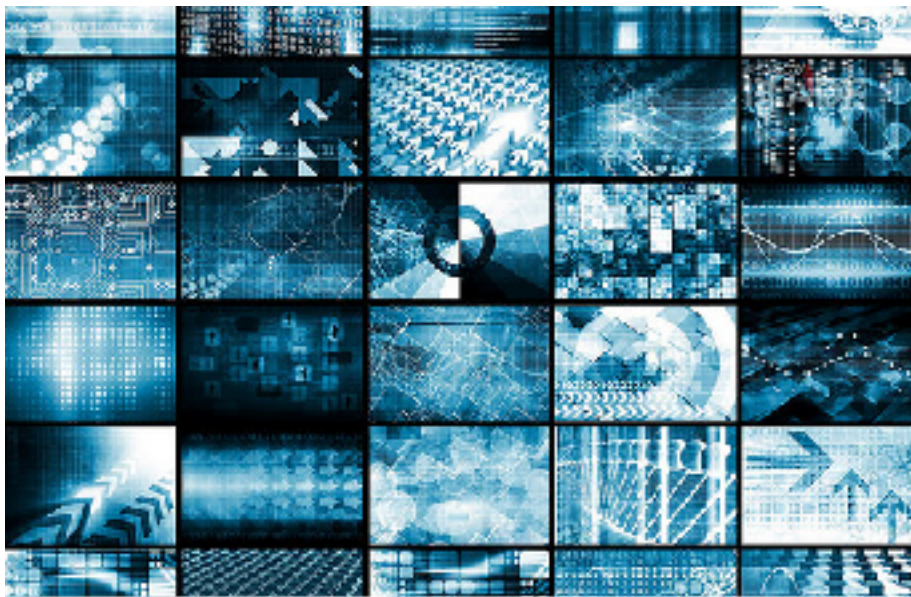


Your privacy matters, stop saying it doesn't

By Alana Do Nascimento, LAPAS intern

This second article tries to explore the thorny question of privacy. In June 2013 the world was shocked by a series of articles based on top secret documents containing informations on the NSA's surveillance practices. The person behind those leaks came out to be Edward Snowden who at the time, was a 29 years old man working for Booz Allen Hamilton, for NSA in Hawaii. After his leaks started a global discussion on privacy.

This is a story about mass surveillance, this is a story about you



Integrated Management System by Shadow Bilgisayer

On December 2012 Edward Snowden started to contact Glenn Greenwald a journalist working for The Guardian but, unable to establish a safe connection, he sent encrypted emails to the documentary maker Laura Poitras.

On May 20, he took a flight to Hong Kong where he would meet Greenwald and Poitras to talk about the massive surveillance system created by the NSA.

On June 6, the scandal begun with the first article released by Greenwald which was called: [NSA collecting phone records of millions of Verizon customers daily](#). There, he reported how the US National Security Agency, was collecting the telephone records of millions of Verizon customers, thank's to a top secret court order which granted the government unlimited authority to obtain communications data, for a three-month period.

On June 7, both The Guardian and the Huffington Post reported how the NSA was collecting data of American and foreign citizens through [Prism](#), a surveillance program tracking online communications directly from Facebook, Google, Mi-

Microsoft, Yahoo and other companies. The program allowed officials to collect material including emails, live chats and search histories.

On June 9, Snowden came out as the unique source behind the leaks.

Days after, many articles were published around the globe. Some, stating that the agency's intelligence-gathering operations had also targeted: NGOs such as Unicef, Oil Petrobras (Brazil's largest company), European commissioners and over 35 world leaders. The bomb was dropped and global debates on online privacy and mass surveillance began.

Snowden was fired and charged with: "theft of government Property," "unauthorized communication of national defense information" and "willful communication of classified communications intelligence information to an unauthorized person." The last two charges fall under the [Espionage Act](#), which has been used for prosecutorial purposes three times since 1917.

He planned to relocate in Ecuador seeking for asylum but, he became stranded in a Russian airport when his passport was annulled by the American government. Now, he still lives in Russia with his girlfriend.

A traitor, a patriot a whistleblower: the world after Snowden's leaks



Ed Snowden by William Burton

Snowden sees himself as a simple citizen who doesn't accept the invasive NSA mass surveillance system. **He is not a traitor nor a hero**, he would be better considered as a whistleblower who worked with a team of reputable, award-winning journalists to bring public attention to a corrupt surveillance system. As a

matter of fact he has given the documents to the public, strongly believing that he wasn't the right person to decide what to do with them. He wanted to make people **aware** of what was happening to their privacy and gave them the choice to consider if that was important or not. According to what happened next to the leaks, it was.

The Snowden's documents caused important changes to the policies related to surveillance worldwide. On June 2, 2015 the Senate enacted the [USA Freedom Act](#), the first bill in over 30 years that actually places restrictions and oversight on the National Security Agency's surveillance powers.

Big tech companies such as Apple, Google and Yahoo are stepping up their efforts in encryption and privacy. Apple was recently involved in a dispute with the FBI after it refused to give the data access of the iPhone tied to a gunman in the San Bernardino, California, shooting in December, 2016. That would be unimaginable without Snowden. Companies were seriously damaged by public opinion and they want to maintain their customers trust even if that means side against the Government. Most importantly, the Snowden leaks have helped to re-establish a relationship between intelligence and the public.

He didn't change society, he gave society the chance to change itself.

Stop saying: "I don't care, I've nothing to hide"



Computer Data Hacker by Blogtrepreneur

Not everybody are grateful to what Snowden has done to wake up consciousness. There are still many people who claims: "I don't care if somebody spies on me, I've nothing to hide".

Gleen Grenwald, during a [TED Talk](#), in 2014, warned the audience about the

dangerous implications of such a statement. According to the sentence, the only people who care about privacy are the bad ones, those who have done something wrong, while all the others are the good ones. Maybe, for those who strongly defend this point of view, he said, the bad people are terrorists or criminals, but in reality for those who are in “charge” bad people are mostly dissident, critical minds ready to fight against injustices, oppressed people, journalists, activists and all who fight for the public good.

According to [William Binney](#), one of the highest-level whistleblowers from NSA, the 80% of those placed under surveillance in the USA were ordinary Americans. Besides, Snowden often has affirmed that the majority of the top secret documents, concerned the competition between countries or industrial, financial and economic issues.

We should be careful summarizing the world with the “bad guys vs good guys” rhetoric. Reality is more complex, we should avoid simplification and start considering also the nuances among black and white.

We all have something to hide, this doesn't mean we are part of some criminal gang. Privacy means protecting our intimacy and our freedom of self expression.

Do you really want to share every thought, every piece of your personality with everybody? Why don't you share all your passwords with your facebook friends then? Would you act the same way if you knew somebody was watching you? Would you dance in that funny way or make the same jokes? I don't think so, and if you get your wits about, you would probably agree with me. Shame is part of human nature. It's ok to hide your stuff, that wouldn't affect your being a good person.

Some reflections and quotes on why you should care about your privacy:



You should care because:

“every border you cross, every purchase you make, every call you dial, every cell phone tower you pass, friend you keep, article you write, site you visit, subject line you type, and packet you route is in the hand of a system whose reach is unlimited[...].”

Taken from one of the encrypted mail Snowden sent to Lora Poitras

You should care because: “even if you’re not doing anything wrong you’re being watched and recorded. You should have a wrong call and they can use the system to go back in time and scrutinize every decision you’ve ever made every friend you have discussed something with and attack you on that basis”.

Taken from a [Snowden's interview](#)

You should care because: “internet has been transformed from the most powerful and democratic instrument to one of mass and indiscriminate surveillance.”

Taken from a Snowden’s speech in “Citizenfour”

You should care because: “privacy empowers and protects the minority. The ability to communicate, organize, and discuss without government interference is what gives dissidents a voice. Without privacy rights, a democratic government accountable to all of its people — not just the majority — simply cannot exist. Someday you may find yourself in the minority.”

Taken from: Andy Yen’s article [Why we Should care about Encryption](#).

You should care because: your trust has been betrayed. Governments has used secrecy and the claim of national security interests to ward off public oversight.

You should care because:

every oppression system starts with mass control.

Useful link on how to protect your privacy online and further advices:

Privacy online is a very complicated topic. You can surf on the internet for hours trying to figure out how to protect yourself online. To avoid you that exhausting research you can start with this:

- [5 Ways to Keep your Data Safe](#) from IDEAS.TED.COM, Cristopher Soghoian, *5 Ways to Keep your Data Safe*, Mar, 16, 2015;
- [surveillance self-defense](#): Tips, Tools and How-tos for Safer Online Communications;
- [encrypt your email](#): you can use [ProtonMail](#), an encrypted email startup based in Geneva, Switzerland, that seeks to make secure email accessible.

Must Read: **1984** by George Orwell. Despite this book has been published in 1949 is still topical! In a dystopic future the world has been divided under the control off three totalitarian superpowers, whose only scope is that of controlling society. A man and women try to rebel...

Watch the documentary **Citizenfour**: “When filmmaker Laura Poitras and journalist Glenn Greenwald flew to Hong Kong to meet Edward Snowden for the first time, Poitras brought her camera with her. The result is a 100% real-life espionage story unfolding minute by minute before our eyes. Citizen Four is a major work on multiple levels, and a deeply unsettling experience. You will never watch again the same way your phone, tablet, laptop, email and credit card, ever again.”

Film trailer: [Citizenfour](#)

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