

Excerpt from 11 disturbing things Snowden has taught us (so far)

What is the extent of the information Edward Snowden has leaked? We break it down.ⁱ

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/politics/130703/edward-snowden-leaks>

(Text is excerpted directly from the original online text)

1) Can you hear me now?

The Guardian reported on June 6 that, according to documents leaked by Edward Snowden, the Obama administration enabled the National Security Agency to collect caller information from Verizon through a “business records” provision of the Patriot Act, established under President George W. Bush. The government ordered Verizon to hand over call information on a daily basis, including the time, location and duration of calls. The Bush administration began collecting such information in October 2001 from AT&T, Verizon and BellSouth, which USA Today reported in 2006.

The consequence:

While US officials sought to reassure the public that such surveillance was legal and part of an ongoing program vital to national security, many Americans called the domestic spying an unnecessary invasion of privacy and lamented that it was even legal in the first place. A national debate quickly erupted.

2) Yes we scan

Snowden also leaked a secret 41-slide PowerPoint presentation apparently used to train US intelligence personnel. The slides detail the NSA’s involvement in a then-clandestine program called PRISM.

PRISM is the NSA effort to collect massive amounts of data from internet companies such as email content, search histories and file transfers tied to potential terrorism or espionage suspects. The PowerPoint presentation confirmed that the NSA is able to directly access the servers of “major US service providers,” describing collaboration with tech companies like YouTube, Skype, Google and Apple. Google, Apple, and others in the tech industry, however, denied awareness of the program.

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PRISM began in 2007 with Microsoft and expanded to include Apple in 2012. To be subject to PRISM surveillance, there need only be “reasonable suspicion” that one of the suspects is outside the United States. Unlike the Verizon court-ordered collaboration, the government can access live information, photos, video chats and data from social networks directly through the companies’ servers without required consent or individual court orders. One slide puts the cost of the program at \$20 million per year.

The consequence:

Domestically, PRISM was criticized for its ability to collect data on US citizens unintentionally. Also, the revelations coincided with a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Barack Obama, adding tension to an already heated dialogue over cyber-espionage between the two countries. The summit in California was focused on US accusations of Chinese cyberattacks; but the US had little credibility in the wake of the Snowden leaks. China was adamant that it too was the victim of US attacks. EU countries were also brought into the mix, and European citizens now worry they have been spied upon through the PRISM program.

3) NSA procedures

On June 20, the Guardian revealed two more documents obtained by Snowden (viewable [here](#) and [here](#)). Signed by Attorney General Eric Holder in 2009, the documents shed light on procedures sanctioned by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. According to the documents, the NSA can keep (and make use of) information inadvertently gathered on US citizens for a period of up to five years — without a warrant — but only if the information is deemed to be relevant in preventing national security threats or to aid further investigations. The information can be sent to allied governments or foreign organizations, so long as the person’s identity is anonymous.

The consequence:

While the documents outline the circumstances the NSA must destroy data collected from US citizens, as well as the rigorous steps analysts are supposed to take to make sure a target is outside the United States, they also reveal several ways the NSA can continue to use data collected on US citizens. The revelations appear to contradict statements by Obama and others that the NSA cannot access data on US citizens without a warrant.

Patrick McFarland, inspector general for the US Office of Personnel Management, meanwhile, announced an ongoing probe into whether a proper background check was conducted before Snowden was given a Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information-level clearance.

The investigation focused on the operations of US Investigations Services (USIS), a Virginia-based information and security company employed by the government to conduct background

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checks. US government officials came under fire during a Senate subcommittee hearing investigating why the NSA hired Snowden despite discrepancies on his resume. Booz Allen Hamilton noted potential issues but failed to act and USIS, which screened Snowden for his government security clearance before his work with Booz Allen Hamilton, was similarly unsuccessful in acting on any suspicious elements.

4) Fail-safe switch

Glenn Greenwald, the Guardian journalist who received Snowden's first leak, told The Daily Beast that the rest of Snowden's files have been disseminated around the world. If something unforeseen befalls Snowden, Greenwald reported, more information will inevitably be leaked.

Greenwald said that though the still-secret documents are encrypted, Snowden has made arrangements for the passwords to reach those with the files if he is unable to access them himself.

Greenwald also said Snowden gave him many more documents than those so far released and believes Snowden has even more on top of that. The documents are said to be stored on four laptops in Snowden's possession. Greenwald said he does not wish to publish any details of the NSA's surveillance systems that could foster or enable security breaches, nor does Snowden.

The consequence:

The fact that Snowden made multiple copies of the classified intelligence he carries created renewed angst among US officials. New questions were raised as to whether the US intelligence community can adequately stem the current leak and prevent future breaches from occurring.

5) NSA surveils Europe

German news magazine Der Spiegel revealed on June 29 it had seen part of a 2010 document, obtained by Snowden, showing that the NSA spied on European citizens and EU officials.

The document reportedly specifies Europeans as a "location target," with Germans singled out as a major focus of US eavesdropping. The document also mentions telecommunications hacking — first reported by EU officials five years ago — of the EU Council of Ministers and the European Council at the Justus Lipsius Building in Brussels. Calls from an NSA-occupied building at the NATO headquarters outside of Brussels, according to the document, were traced to the Lipsius Building.

The consequence:

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Europeans erupted in anger over the new allegations. German Justice Minister Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger said: "If the media reports are accurate, then this recalls the methods used by enemies during the Cold War."

Grievances with the US surveillance program were particularly evident in Germany where, after a frank conversation between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Obama during his visit to Berlin earlier in the month, cybersecurity was a hot topic.

ⁱ This text has been excerpted. The original post listed 11 things. We have excerpted five of them.

“11 disturbing things Snowden has taught us (so far)” Organizer

What information did Snowden leak to the public?	Consequence of his action	My response to Snowden’s actions	My partner’s response to Snowden’s actions

In an informal paragraph, answer this question: What are thoughts about Snowden after reading this

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ACLU: “Edward Snowden is a Whistleblower”

- Directions:**
1. Identify at two reasons from the ACLU article that the writer, Michael German, uses to support his argument that Snowden is a whistleblower
 2. For each identified reason, explain why you believe this reason is important for people to understand (why is it significant?)
 3. Go back to the article you read yesterday, “11 disturbing things Snowden has taught us. (so far)” and find a fact that relates to the reason you identified from the ACLU article

Reasons supporting that Snowden is a whistleblower	Why do you believe this reason is important for people to understand?	What fact from the “11 disturbing things...” article relates to this claim?

After reading the text and discussing with your partner, what do you think about Snowden’s actions? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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***The New Yorker*: “Edward Snowden is No Hero”**

- Directions:**
1. Identify at least reasons from the *The New Yorker* article that the writer, Jeffrey Toobin uses to support his argument that Snowden deserves to be in prison.
 2. For each identified reason, explain why you believe this reason is important for people to understand (why is it significant?)
 3. Go back to the article you read yesterday, “11 disturbing things Snowden has taught us (so far)” and find a fact that relates to the reason you identified from the ACLU article

Reasons supporting that Snowden deserves to be in prison	Why do you believe this reason is important for people to understand?	What fact from the “11 disturbing things...” article relates to this reason?

Now that you have read and worked with all three texts, what do you think about Snowden’s actions? Discuss with your partner. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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**“Edward Snowden is a Whistleblower”
by Michael German**

Directions: Read the below question carefully and answer using evidence from the text.

Question: In the last paragraph on page one of the article, Michael German writes:

It is clear that these disclosures benefited the public, by giving victims of illegal surveillance—essentially all Americans—the knowledge and opportunity to challenge these unconstitutional programs, both in the courts and through their elected representatives in Congress. Even President Obama said he “welcomed this debate” and thought it was “healthy for our democracy.” Yet a properly informed public debate on these programs would not have been possible without Snowden’s leaks (1-2).

In the paragraphs on the first page, identify and briefly explain one piece of evidence that German cites which supports German’s claim that Snowden’s actions (leaking the documents made public debate on national security possible).

**“Edward Snowden is No Hero”
by Jeffrey Toobin**

Directions: Read the below question carefully and answer using evidence from the text.

Question: Jeffrey Toobin believes that Snowden “deserves to be in prison.” In the fourth paragraph, he writes, “Any government employee or contractor is warned repeatedly that the unauthorized disclosure of classified information is a crime.”

Identify and briefly explain one piece of evidence from the text that supports Toobin’s argument that Snowden “deserves to be in prison.”

Counterargument Planning

Write your argument/thesis statement: Is Snowden a whistleblower, criminal, or both?

Write the counterargument, your rebuttal, evidence you would use to support your rebuttal and how that evidence supports your rebuttal. Your evidence must come from one of the three texts.

Counterargument: _____

Your rebuttal: _____

Evidence: _____

Explain how the evidence supports your rebuttal: _____

Is Edward Snowden a whistleblower, a criminal, or both?

Writing Task

Directions:

Please respond to the prompt below in writing. You may use the texts, your graphic organizer and/or constructed response questions to inform your writing. You may take notes on this paper, but you should write your entire response on the lined paper provided by your teacher.

Writing Prompt

Edward Snowden admitted to leaking national security information to British and American press. Opinions on Snowden differ greatly across the United States and the world. You have read and discussed differing viewpoints on Snowden. Now it is time for you to articulate your argument. In a well-constructed essay, answer the following question:

- Is Edward Snowden a whistleblower, criminal, or both?

Be Sure To:

- Clearly and concisely state your argument/thesis
- Clearly and concisely state at least two reasons with relevant textual evidence, making sure to explain how your evidence supports your claim
- Include a counterclaim with a rebuttal and supporting textual evidence
- Use precise language and vocabulary to inform or explain your topic
- Establish and maintain a formal style
- Provide a concluding section that follows form and supports your explanation