

# POLITICS

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# NSA slides explain the PRISM data-collection program

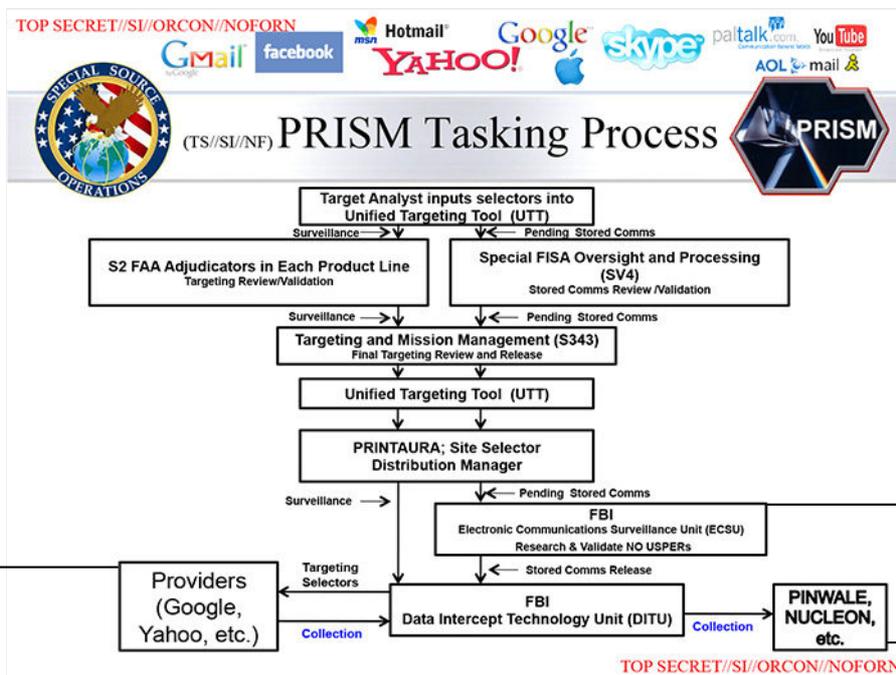
Published: June 6, 2013, Updated June 29, 2013

The top-secret PRISM program allows the U.S. intelligence community to gain access from nine Internet companies to a wide range of digital information, including e-mails and stored data, on foreign targets operating outside the United States. The program is court-approved but does not require individual warrants. Instead, it operates under a broader authorization from federal judges who oversee the use of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). Some documents describing the program were first released by The Washington Post on June 6. The newly released documents below give additional details about how the program operates, including the levels of review and supervisory control at the NSA and FBI. The documents also show how the program interacts with the Internet companies. These slides, annotated by The Post, represent a selection from the overall document, and certain portions are redacted. [Read related article.](#)

### New slides published June 29

#### Acquiring data from a new target

This slide describes what happens when an NSA analyst "tasks" the PRISM system for information about a new surveillance target. The request to add a new target is passed automatically to a supervisor who reviews the "selectors," or search terms. The supervisor must endorse the analyst's "reasonable belief," defined as 51 percent confidence, that the specified target is a foreign national who is overseas at the time of collection.



The FBI uses government equipment on private company property to retrieve matching information from a participating company, such as Microsoft or Yahoo and pass it without further review to the NSA.

For stored communications, but not for live surveillance, the FBI consults its own databases to make sure the selectors do not match known Americans.

This is where data enters NSA systems, described more fully on the next slide.

The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court does not review any individual collection request.

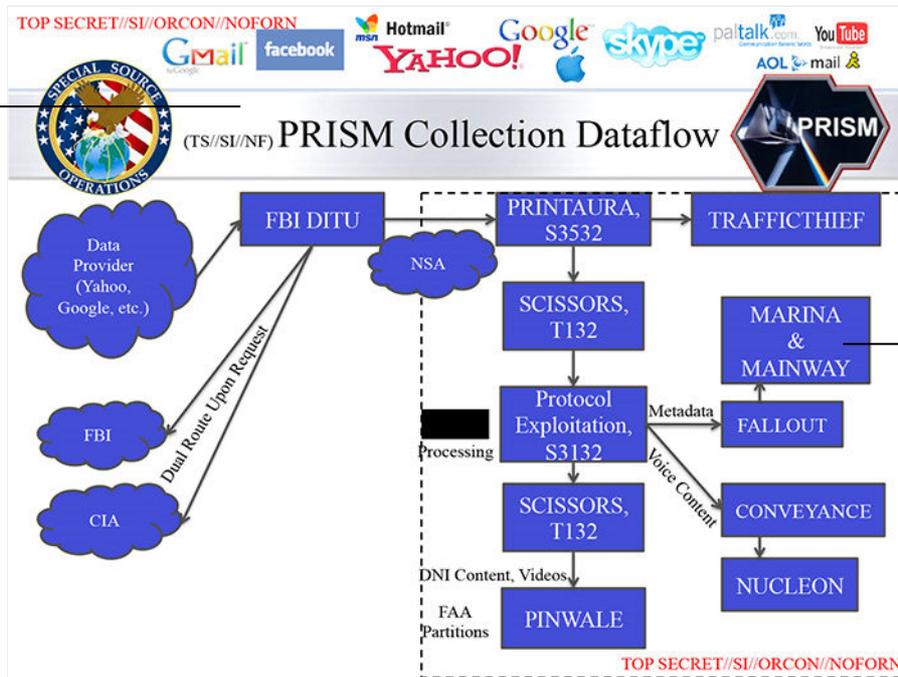
#### Analyzing information collected from private companies

After communications information is acquired, the data are processed and analyzed by specialized systems that handle voice, text, video and "digital network information" that includes the locations and unique device signatures of targets.



See the inner workings of the NSA's top secret spy program »

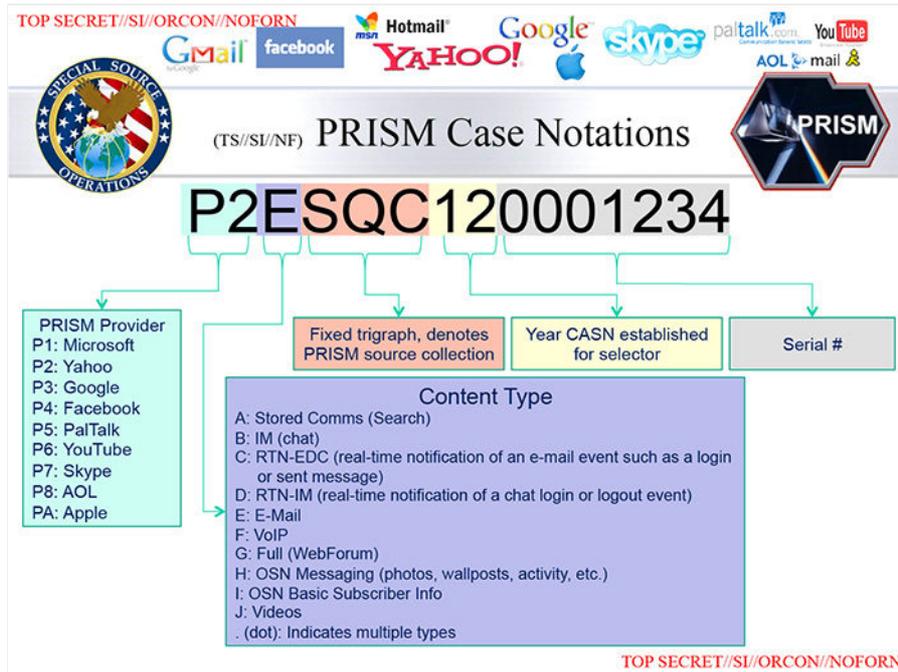
From the FBI's interception unit on the premises of private companies, the information is passed to one or more "customers" at the NSA, CIA or FBI.



**PRINTAURA** automates the traffic flow. **SCISSORS** and **Protocol Exploitation** sort data types for analysis in **NUCLEON** (voice), **PINWALE** (video), **MAINWAY** (call records) and **MARINA** (Internet logs systems identified as **FALLOUT** and **CONVEYANCE** appear to be a final layer of filtering to reduce the intake of information about Americans.

**Each target is assigned a case notation**

The PRISM case notation format reflects the availability, confirmed by The Post's reporting, of real-time surveillance as well as stored content.



Depending on the provider, the NSA may receive live notifications when a target logs on or sends an e-mail, or may monitor a voice, text or voice chat as it happens (noted on the first slide as "Surveillance").

**Searching the PRISM database**

On April 5, according to this slide, there were 117,675 active surveillance targets in PRISM's counterterrorism database. The slide does not show how many other Internet users, and among them how many Americans, have their communications collected "incidentally" during surveillance of those targets.



Original slides published June 6

**Introducing the program**

A slide briefing analysts at the National Security Agency about the program touts its effectiveness and features the logos of the companies involved.

**Monitoring a target's communication**

This diagram shows how the bulk of the world's electronic communications move through companies based in the United States.

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**SPECIAL SOURCE OPERATIONS** (TS//SI//NF) **Introduction** **PRISM**

*U.S. as World's Telecommunications Backbone*

- Much of the world's communications flow through the U.S.
- A target's phone call, e-mail or chat will take the **cheapest** path, **not the physically most direct** path – you can't always predict the path.
- Your target's communications could easily be flowing into and through the U.S.

International Internet Regional Bandwidth Capacity in 2011  
Source: Telegeography Research

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**Providers and data**

The PRISM program collects a wide range of data from the nine companies, although the details vary by provider.

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Gmail facebook msn Hotmail Google YAHOO! skype paltalk.com YouTube AOL mail

**SPECIAL SOURCE OPERATIONS** (TS//SI//NF) **PRISM Collection Details** **PRISM**

Current Providers

- Microsoft (Hotmail, etc.)
- Google
- Yahoo!
- Facebook
- PalTalk
- YouTube
- Skype
- AOL
- Apple

What Will You Receive in Collection (Surveillance and Stored Comms)?  
It varies by provider. In general:

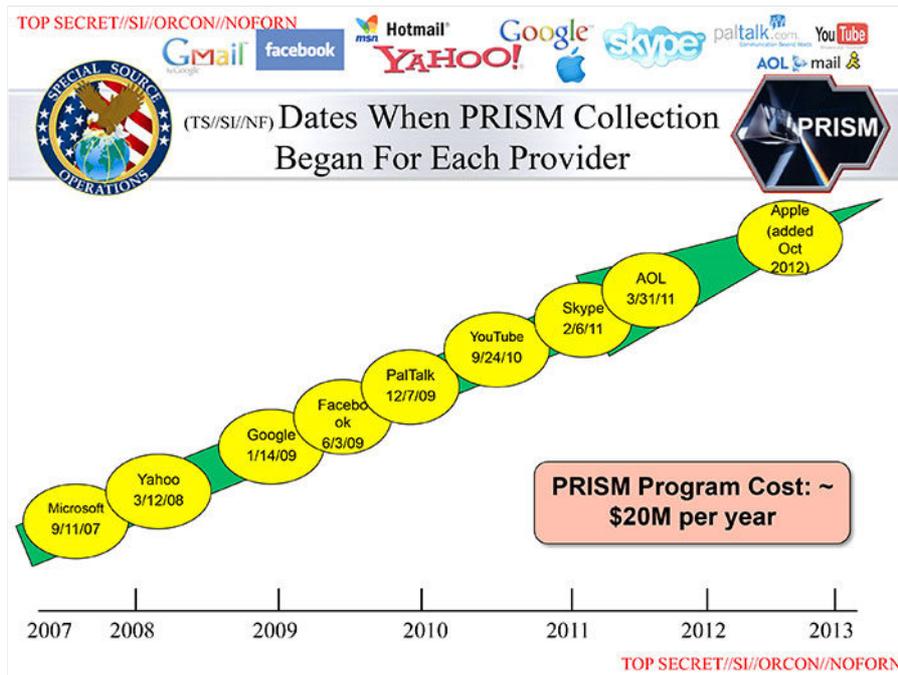
- E-mail
- Chat – video, voice
- Videos
- Photos
- Stored data
- VoIP
- File transfers
- Video Conferencing
- Notifications of target activity – logins, etc.
- Online Social Networking details
- **Special Requests**

Complete list and details on PRISM web page:  
Go PRISMFAA

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**Participating providers**

This slide shows when each company joined the program, with Microsoft being the first, on Sept. 11, 2007, and Apple the most recent, in October 2012.



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5amefa91

4:14 PM UTC+0100

Read these Top Secret//SI//ORCON//NOFORN NSA Briefing slides that the Washington Post put up:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/polit...>

It shows NSA surveillance practices in their own words:

- A. Stored Comms (Search)
- B. IM (chat)
- C. RTN-EDV (real-time notification of an e-mail event such as a login or sent message)
- D. RTN-IM (real-time notification of a chat login or logout event)
- E. E-Mail
- F. VoIP
- G. Full (WebForum)
- H. OSN Messaging (photos, wallposts, activity, etc.)
- I. OSN Basic Subscriber Info
- ... **See More**

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VPR

7/2/2013 11:09 PM UTC+0100

What is this system used for? Only to prevent terrorism? Something else? How many errors can government surveillance of persons have? Can a person choose to be in surveillance? What risk does a person have if he/she chooses to be in surveillance to prevent terrorism? US is the reference of free world. Americans and the rest of the world's citizens need to find a solution to this problem. Let's work together to find it.

Reply



BuddhaGnostic

7/2/2013 10:57 PM UTC+0100

Backtrack/Kali Linux, Metasploit, Wireshark, Nmap, et. al.....Anyone who thinks they enjoy electronic privacy is a fool. What pisses me off is the incompetence of those in charge of our intelligence apparatus.

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The debate over the propriety of Bush's surveillance program played out in strikingly similar ways to the debate currently raging over the programs continued by the Obama administration,

**NSA begins briefing lawmakers**

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**Public reaction to NSA monitoring**

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roadbuzzer95

7/2/2013 10:46 PM UTC+0100

I WONDER WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT, PLUS THE NSA IS GETTING WHAT IT DESERVE'S FOR LETTING THIS HAPPEN IN THE FIRST PLACE, HIRING SOMEONE WITH A CONSCIENCE.

Reply



OdinsAcolyte

7/2/2013 4:33 PM UTC+0100

Illegal and evil. I don't care how many police, attorneys and judges you pay to say otherwise. "papers please"

Our country is starting to resemble East Germany. We can fix it you know.

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