

*Wikimedia Foundation v. NSA*  
No. 15-cv-0062-TSE (D. Md.)

# Plaintiff's Exhibit 33



## Policy Action List

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# Privacy

Everyone should be free to read and write without governments looking over their shoulders.



"What Are You Looking At?" by Jonas Bengtsson, licensed under CC BY 2.0 / cropped.

## Why You Should Care

- 🐦 Privacy is essential for our intellectual freedom: reading, writing, and researching.
- 🐦 People should be free to read and write without fear of governments or advertisers looking over their shoulder.
- 🐦 Privacy can be an important personal preference even for those that have nothing to hide.

Privacy is the bedrock of intellectual freedom and thus of free knowledge. It sustains freedom of expression and association, which in turn enable inquiry, dialogue, and creation. Privacy is essential to Wikimedia's vision of empowering everyone to share in the sum of all human knowledge. People should not have to look over their shoulders before searching, pause before contributing to controversial articles, or refrain from sharing verifiable but unpopular information.

The Wikimedia projects serve as a platform for people from all over the world to share and study knowledge. Sometimes, people may need to remain anonymous for personal or political reasons when contributing to the Wikimedia projects. Wikimedia allows people to edit under a pseudonym, without providing any personal information, or without even creating an account. Anonymity and pseudonymity can protect people from retaliation for contributing to the Wikimedia projects.

People also need to feel comfortable that they can read Wikipedia without the fear that the government or other third parties are tracking or watching them. Therefore, all traffic to and from the Wikimedia projects is encrypted through the HTTPS protocol. We also use Strict Transport Security (HSTS), which instructs web browsers to only interact with Wikimedia projects over an encrypted connection, protecting against efforts to break HTTPS and intercept traffic.

## Your Help is Welcome

To discuss or help translate this page visit the public policy discussion group.

Wikimedia projects are not built in isolation. The privacy practices of other sites with reliable sources impact the Wikimedia mission to collect and share knowledge. For our free knowledge projects to work, we need security and privacy across the internet so editors and readers can freely research the sources needed to build Wikipedia.

In particular, internet users cannot be subjected to mass surveillance, which chills intellectual curiosity and creativity. Privacy is a fundamental right recognised under international law like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 17) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 12). Indiscriminate mass surveillance violates this fundamental right. We strongly oppose mass surveillance by any government or entity. To that end, we signed the Necessary and Proportionate Principles on the application of human rights to surveillance that demand that governments respect basic principles such as:

- Proportionality: The need for surveillance should be carefully weighed against the implications for privacy rights and freedom of expression.
- User Notification: Individuals who will be the subject of surveillance must have enough time and information to appeal the decision.

- **Transparency:** Governments must be transparent about the extent of surveillance and the techniques they employ.
- **Integrity of communication and systems:** Governments should not compel internet service providers of hardware and software vendors to build monitoring capability into their systems.

In a time when the collection of private data has become a business model, Wikimedians believe in the importance of privacy. This human right protects our users and consequently the creation of free knowledge.

## Related Resources

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Global surveillance disclosures (2013–present)

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Privacy by Design

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Necessary and Proportionate

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