

personal english



Topic of the Month #26

Is Big Brother Watching You?



The individual responsible for one of the most significant leaks in US history is **Edward Snowden**, a former technical assistant for the CIA. The **National Security Agency's** top-secret 'black budget,' which had been obtained from Snowden by **The Washington Post** in **2013**, revealed that the NSA was paying U.S. companies for unauthorized access to their communications networks. Four years after this revelation, the storm has been forgotten and the NSA continues to monitor American citizens with the support of the US Government and the Congress. The NSA, however, is not the only one. We have little privacy indeed, if we consider that governments are entitled to eavesdrop on our phone calls, track our movements, and scrutinize our purchases. On average, any law-abiding citizen going about their daily business will be monitored and tracked in more than **20 different ways** every day, by both governments and corporations. Big Brother is indeed watching – better still, monitoring – us, and he can do so thanks to the technology which has fostered the **media-centered society** where we live. A society where – just like in **George Orwell's Oceania** – most people willingly and readily hand over all their private data to governments and corporations in a **narcissistic frenzy** fueled by such **social media** as Facebook, Instagram, and the like. In their feverish attempt to catch people's attention to get some 'recognition,' most social media users lose sight of **privacy and data protection rights**, thus leaving themselves exposed to **political manipulation**, **corporate swindle**, and many other risks – which may not be worth taking for the sake of fifteen minutes of fame among their own Facebook contacts...

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