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# Snowden docs detail collaboration between NSA and Microsoft

The NSA is also worried that Snowden had access to details of additional high-profile espionage operations

BY ALEX HALPERIN



Edward Snowden (Credit: AP)

Microsoft collaborated more closely with U.S. intelligence than had previously been known, The Guardian's Glenn Greenwald and team reported today based information provided to them by Edward Snowden. According to the piece, the software giant allowed "users' communications to be intercepted, including helping the National Security Agency to circumvent the company's own encryption."

The revelations include that:

- Microsoft helped the NSA to circumvent its encryption to address concerns that the agency would be unable to intercept web chats on the new Outlook.com portal;
- The agency already had pre-encryption stage access to email on Outlook.com, including Hotmail;
- The company worked with the FBI this year to allow

the NSA easier access via Prism to its cloud storage service SkyDrive, which now has more than 250 million users worldwide;

- Microsoft also worked with the FBI's Data Intercept Unit to "understand" potential issues with a feature in Outlook.com that allows users to create email aliases;
- Skype, which was bought by Microsoft in October 2011, worked with intelligence agencies last year to allow Prism to collect video of conversations as well as audio;

Microsoft responded with a statement: “When we upgrade or update products we aren’t absolved from the need to comply with existing or future lawful demands.” The company reiterated its argument that it provides customer data “only in response to government demands and we only ever comply with orders for requests about specific accounts or identifiers”.

In other Snowden related news, the National Security Agency reportedly fears that the leaker “gained access to sensitive files that outline espionage operations against Chinese leaders and other critical targets, the [Washington Post reports](#).”

“We’re deeply concerned,” said one senior intelligence official, who like others interviewed for this article, was not authorized to speak on the record. “The more that this gets made public, the more capability we lose.”

Snowden was able to range across hundreds of thousands of pages of documents on NSA networks, said one former official briefed on the issue. Another intelligence official cautioned that at this point in the investigation, he did not appear to have obtained “collected data,” or the raw intelligence that results from hacking and other collection operations.

“He got a lot,” the official continued, but it was “not even close to the lion’s share” of what the NSA is engaged in. Still, the official said, harm to the efforts “is a concern.”

According to Glenn Greenwald, Snowden has distributed encrypted documents to a network of people. The Washington Post which, along with the Guardian, received documents from Snowden, has not said how many documents it is holding.

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