

DAILY NEWS

U.S

Microsoft a 'team sport' to NSA in sharing information on customers: report

New documents leaked by Edward Snowden and reported by the Guardian reveal how cozy the government and its tech giant bedfellow are when it comes to privacy.

BY [STEPHEN REX BROWN](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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VINCENT YU/AP

Glenn Greenwald (left), a Guardian reporter, leaves a Hong Kong hotel room on Monday and spoke to media about NSA leaker Edward Snowden.

Microsoft was so accommodating to the National Security Agency's requests for information on its customers that the NSA called its digital spying program "a team sport," according to a new report.

The latest documents leaked by Edward Snowden and reported by the Guardian newspaper reveal the extent of cooperation between the tech giant — which advertises its commitment to users' privacy — and the government.

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HANDOUT/REUTERS

NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden released yet more information about how much the government may know about customers using Microsoft products, including Outlook email.

Microsoft worked with the spy agency to ensure analysts had access to its Outlook email service as it was rolled out with better security protections earlier this year to replace Hotmail, the paper reported Thursday. The government also was granted access to emails before they were encrypted — a protection that users employ specifically to keep their messages from being read or analyzed by anyone but the intended recipient.

And when Microsoft bought the popular chat service Skype, the company helped the NSA ensure it could monitor both audio and video conversations.

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PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

Microsoft is a 'team sport' to the National Security Agency, according to a new report.

A previous leak revealed the existence of a program dubbed Prism, which gives the NSA direct access to the servers of nine major Internet companies like Google, Facebook and Apple.

Wednesday's additional information — gleaned from internal NSA newsletters — provides more insight into how those tech companies aid the government in monitoring a wide manner of digital communications. The Guardian reported the NSA hailed how easily the information could be shared with the CIA and FBI, calling the program "a team sport."

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ZOLTAN MATHE/EPA

Microsoft has readily shared customers' information with the government, according to a new report leaked by Edward Snowden and reported by the Guardian.

Sweeping and top-secret orders leaked by Snowden — who remains holed up in a Moscow airport seeking asylum — show that NSA analysts have clearance to access an individual's online activity provided they are 51% sure that one of the targeted parties in the communication is a foreigner not on American soil. An NSA agent needs an individual warrant to access an American citizen's Internet activity — unlike Americans' call data, which is gathered en masse.

Microsoft insisted in a statement that it only complies with specific government requests for information. "We would not respond to the kind of blanket orders discussed in the press over the past few weeks," Microsoft said.

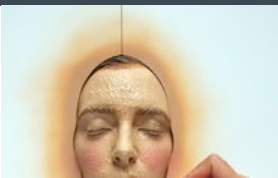
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The company has said that in the last six months it "received between 6,000 and 7,000 criminal and national security warrants, subpoenas and orders affecting between 31,000 and 32,000 consumer accounts from U.S. governmental entities." The company said that was only a fraction of its global customer base.

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