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NSA collecting almost 200 million global text messages ... EVERY DAY

Posted By [Giuseppe Macri](#) On 5:45 PM 01/16/2014 In | [No Comments](#)

More secret documents leaked by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden reveal the NSA collects about 200 million text messages daily, drawing information about location, contacts, financial accounts and travel from the intercepted messages.

[The Guardian reports](#) the signals intelligence agency collects the short message service texts in bulk, and that the information was made available to the NSA's British counterpart, the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), allowing it to search the untargeted metadata of UK citizens.

Dishfire, the program's codename, dates back to at least 2011 according to a document obtained by the Guardian titled "SMS Text Messages: A Goldmine to Exploit." Another program called "Prefer" automatically analyzes the data, meaning it isn't just collected and stored, as the agency has claimed in the past — it's actively searched after being apprehended from non-agency targets.

Data from U.S. signals is apparently "minimized," according to the documents.

The program makes the most use of automated text messages from various service providers about financial transactions, roaming charges, delayed flights, missed calls and scheduled alerts, from which it can pull data about address book contacts, credit cards, bank accounts and visited locations.

A GCHQ memo explains the Dishfire program is especially useful for identifying new targets, and for going back and establishing an electronic trail of new targets after they're identified.

"As we have previously stated, the implication that NSA's collection is arbitrary and unconstrained is false," an NSA spokeswoman said in the Guardian. "NSA's activities are focused and specifically deployed against — and only against — valid foreign intelligence targets in response to intelligence requirements."

"In addition, NSA actively works to remove extraneous data, to include that of innocent foreign citizens, as early as possible in the process," the spokeswoman said.

President Barack Obama is expected to announce Friday a set of rules and policy changes to the NSA after assembling a team of intelligence and privacy experts late last year to make recommendations in light of the scandal.

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