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Tech industry slams NSA webcam spying

The tech industry came out against what it called an "outrageous" surveillance program that allowed intelligence agencies to capture images from users' webcams.

Reports surfaced Thursday that the National Security Agency helped its British counterpart to access and capture images, including sexually explicit ones, from millions of Yahoo chat users between 2008 and 2012.

Yahoo denied having any knowledge of the program and repeated calls it has made with other tech companies for reform of U.S. surveillance laws.

Trade associations representing major players in the tech industry followed suit.

The latest report about webcam spying "indicates government privacy violations have reached an alarming new level of intrusiveness," Ed Black, president of the Computer and Communications Industry Association, said in a statement.

Black's group includes Yahoo, Microsoft, Google, Sprint and T-Mobile.

"The size and audacity of this online spying is outrageous and shows how government surveillance officials will go as far as they can to gather data with minimal regard for privacy expectations, ethics or laws," Black said.

The Internet Association, which includes Facebook, Google, Amazon and Yahoo, called for surveillance reform measures "to limit governments' authority to collect users' information and increase transparency about government demands."

"The most pressing Internet user privacy issue continues to concern governments' access to and use of electronic data," the group's president, Michael Beckerman, said in a statement.

Beckerman called on governments to "immediately act to reform the practices and laws regulating surveillance and collection of Internet users' information."

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