



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on July 12, 2010

## Big Brother: NSA's "Perfect Citizen" Program

The National Security Agency (NSA) initiated another cyber-snooping program it dubbed "Perfect Citizen" with a \$100 million contract for the Raytheon Corporation, according to the Wall Street Journal for July 8. "Perfect Citizen is Big Brother," opined one internal Raytheon email, according to the Wall Street Journal.



"The overall purpose of the [program] is our Government ... feel[s] that they need to insure the Public Sector is doing all they can to secure Infrastructure critical to our National Security," the *Wall Street Journal* [explained](#). "The surveillance by the National Security Agency, the government's chief eavesdropping agency, would rely on a set of sensors deployed in computer networks for critical infrastructure that would be triggered by unusual activity suggesting an impending cyber attack, though it wouldn't persistently monitor the whole system, these people said."

In other words, the "perfect citizen" in NSA parlance is an informant.

The *Journal* [reported](#) the unofficial rationale for these new sensors in the electronic infrastructure:

U.S. intelligence officials have grown increasingly alarmed about what they believe to be Chinese and Russian surveillance of computer systems that control the electric grid and other U.S. infrastructure. Officials are unable to describe the full scope of the problem, however, because they have had limited ability to pull together all the private data.

"Perfect Citizen is purely a vulnerabilities-assessment and capabilities-development contract," NSA spokesperson Judith Emmel [told](#) *PC World* magazine for July 9, after the spy agency refused to comment for the *Wall Street Journal* story.

"This is a research and engineering effort. There is no monitoring activity involved, and no sensors are employed in this endeavor."

Emmel added that "This contract provides a set of technical solutions that help the National Security Agency better understand the threats to national security networks, which is a critical part of NSA's mission of defending the nation." She also denied claims that the program would include surveillance of American citizens. "Any suggestions that there are illegal or invasive domestic activities associated with this contracted effort are simply not true.... We strictly adhere to both the spirit and the letter of U.S. laws and regulations."

Of course, this is the same federal government that [repeatedly claimed for years](#) that "Law enforcement



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officers need a federal judge’s permission to wiretap a foreign terrorist’s phone, or to track his calls, or to search his property,” even as the [NSA engaged in widespread warrantless surveillance upon millions of American citizens](#), most of whom were not suspected of breaking the law.

The [Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution](#) requires four tests for the constitutionality of a federal search: 1. A court warrant, 2. the warrant must be supported by an oath, 3. the warrant must be supported by “probable cause” that a crime has been committed, and 4. the warrant must describe particularly what is being searched and what is being searched for. The NSA routinely ignores these requirements.

Since existing NSA surveillance programs blatantly violate the four-part requirement of the Constitution’s Fourth Amendment for federal searches, and the agency has a history of persistent lying about the breadth of its warrantless surveillance, the new “Perfect Citizen” could very well be yet one more massive NSA program that seeks to trash the U.S. Constitution about which federal officials are blatantly lying.

*Photo: - U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Keith Alexander, director of the National Security Agency, speaks at the RSA security convention in San Francisco on April 21, 2009: AP Images*



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