



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on September 5, 2017

How the CIA Secretly Collects Biometric Data

The whistleblowing site WikiLeaks recently published a cache of documents that reveal, among other things, the existence of several online programs employed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to gather biometric data collected by the spies' sister agencies.

Using a cyber tool called ExpressLane, the CIA, according to the information dumped by WikiLeaks, infiltrates the various surreptitiously seized and catalogued biometric databases kept by the National Security Agency (NSA), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).



According to WikiLeaks' description of the application, it was installed without being detected by the liaison officers of the other federal agencies because it was packaged as part of a scheduled upgrade.

This latest evidence of the uncovered unconstitutional violation of the Fourth Amendment by our own government was a small part of the reams and reams (some 8,761 documents) of information released in March by WikiLeaks as part of its "Vault 7 Project."

Other disclosures include the CIA's program of targeting text messages sent and received by smart devices running Google-owned Android operating systems. The program's codename is HighRise. Here's the WikiLeaks description of the digital dragnet:

HighRise is an Android application designed for mobile devices running Android 4.0 to 4.3. It provides a redirector function for SMS messaging that could be used by a number of IOC tools that use SMS messages for communication between implants and listening posts.

HighRise, the oft-maligned whistleblowing organization explained, is an application that acts as a proxy for texts being sent and received. The texts are then routed to an Internet "listening post" (LP) and give the CIA a secure connection between the target and the agency's field asset carrying out the operation.

Apple devices aren't immune to the CIA's covert collection of data.

Per the information released in Vault 7, the CIA uses three applications — Achilles, Aeris, and the SeaPea — to hack messages sent and received using Apple's MacOS.

Perhaps the most disturbing and degrading of the CIA's unconstitutional access to the electronic files and activity of Americans and others is the one codenamed Project CouchPotato. This program remotely gains access to users' videos and then collects and stores any video streams found on the target's computer.

Here's the official description of the program as released by WikiLeaks: CouchPotato "provides the ability to collect either the stream as a video file (AVI) or capture still images (JPG) of frames from the stream that are of significant change from a previously captured frame."



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Each of these cyber tools — when used against Americans — is a deprivation of liberties explicitly protected by the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which reads:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

These restrictions on federal power are not negotiable and cannot be compromised unilaterally. The CIA may not grant itself, nor can Congress grant it, the power to pry into the computers, cellphones, and tablets of Americans, unless the prying is preceded by the obtaining of a Fourth Amendment-compliant warrant.

The summary is shocking and should spur Americans to contact their elected representatives in Congress and demand that the CIA be investigated and that every application and operation being deployed by the spy agency should be shut down immediately.



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