



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 10, 2015

The ACLU had attempted a lawsuit in 2013 against the NSA's warrantless wiretapping program, but the Supreme Court rejected the case because the plaintiffs could not provide sufficient proof that they had been spied on.

The Wikimedia blog post addresses that lawsuit, stating that it was dismissed by the Supreme Court because the parties did not have standing. However, the post explains that the disclosures from that case revealed some troubling information and may have provided Wikipedia all the standing it needs for this lawsuit:

The 2013 mass surveillance disclosures included a slide from a classified NSA presentation that made explicit reference to Wikipedia, using our global trademark. Because these disclosures revealed that the government specifically targeted Wikipedia and its users, we believe we have more than sufficient evidence to establish standing.

In a March 10 *New York Times* [op-ed](#) by Lila Tretikov, executive director of the Wikimedia Foundation, and Wikimedia co-founder Jimmy Wales, they elaborate on their concerns regarding the privacy of the volunteers who contribute their time to writing Wikipedia articles and make it possible for Wikipedia to operate:

On our servers, run by the nonprofit Wikimedia Foundation, those volunteers discuss their work on everything from Tiananmen Square to gay rights in Uganda. Many of them prefer to work anonymously, especially those who work on controversial issues or who live in countries with repressive governments.

These volunteers should be able to do their work without having to worry that the United States government is monitoring what they read and write.

Wales and Tretikov contend that Wikipedia has been a useful and educational conduit for people to gain information that they may not otherwise have access to, citing as an example articles written during the 2011 Arab uprisings. They believe that knowledge that the NSA is analyzing Wikipedia contributions may compel writers to stop posting, in fear that their identities could be revealed to their own governments.

The lawsuit is seeking an end to the NSA's surveillance of Internet traffic and a ruling that such a practice is unconstitutional. The lawsuit also asks the court to demand that the federal government destroy all collected communications as part of this program.

"By tapping the backbone of the internet, the NSA is straining the backbone of democracy," Tretikov said. "Wikipedia is founded on the freedoms of expression, inquiry, and information. By violating our users' privacy, the NSA is threatening the intellectual freedom that is central to people's ability to create and understand knowledge."



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