



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on April 10, 2023

IRS Looking to Buy Internet-traffic Monitoring Technology

The IRS is in the market for technology that would give them the ability to monitor Americans' online activity. The monitoring system sought by the IRS has already been sold by the manufacturer to the FBI and the Department of Defense.

[As reported by Vice:](#)

The company, called Team Cymru, provides access to "netflow" data, which can show activity on the wider internet, such as which server communicated with another. This is information that may ordinarily only be available to the company hosting the server or the internet service provider carrying the traffic.



Nick Youngson/Pix4free

The particular Team Cymru product the IRS is interested in obtaining is called "Recon-Advanced." According to Vice, Recon-Advanced gives the client "access to internet traffic telemetry," which is described by Team Cymru as "the world's largest Threat Intelligence data ocean." Vice says the product description page claims that Recon can "trace malicious activity through a dozen or more proxies and VPNs to identify the origin of a cyber threat."

Now, the IRS would likely claim that they want to monitor internet traffic in order to prevent hackers from gaining access to the the agency's servers, and thus to protect the private data of millions of Americans from being stolen.

Anyone who has kept up with just how committed the tax collectors are to identifying and targeting groups and individuals of a conservative bent would realize that there's little to no chance that the IRS intends to use the Recon technology to defend data. The more likely purpose for the purchase is to keep track of the online traffic of those they want to audit for being patriotic.

Team Cymru [reportedly](#) admitted to Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) that they obtain "netflow data from third parties in exchange for threat intelligence."

That data is then offered for sale by Team Cymru to its other clients for their use, for any purpose the clients see fit.

According to the IRS procurement document, the internet monitoring tool will need to be able to track and record "65 days [of] traffic history." There will be no suspicion of criminal activity. Of course, the IRS has no authority to carry on domestic surveillance — online or offline.

In fact, there isn't a single branch, department, or agency of the federal government that can constitutionally carry on unwarranted searches and seizures of Americans.

Americans are endowed by their Creator with the right to be free from unwarranted searches and



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seizures. When the government takes away these rights, then there is no liberty, regardless of pretexts and purposes put forth by the federal government.

While it's true that most Americans have "done nothing wrong" criminally speaking, it is equally true that most of us have done many embarrassing things that we would prefer not to have put in a file for future use by political enemies — inside or outside the government. What are these possible peccadilloes? Think bad credit, poor scholastic performance, web surfing habits, sensitive medical diagnoses, etc.

It is also important to remember that there is no evidence that the government's massive surveillance and deprivations of rights has made us any safer. What, then, is the true purpose of the surveillance?

It isn't security. Demanding freedom in exchange for safety is the economy of tyrants. When the federal government — or any government — robs citizens of their basic civil rights, then that government has become despotic by definition.

One unwarranted wiretap, one unwarranted seizure of a phone record, one search of records of an individual's digital communications, and the collection and cataloging of 65 days of internet traffic history of one person is too many. If we believe in the rule of law, then the supreme constitutional law of the land must be adhered to. The standard is not whether or not the some bureaucrat thinks the denial of liberty is "okay." The standard is the Constitution — for every issue, on every occasion, with no exceptions. Anything less than that is a step toward tyranny.

Now, the IRS is taking another step toward tracking anyone at any time for any reason. Taken together, the roster of snooping programs in use by the federal government places every American under the threat of constant surveillance. The courts, Congress, and the president have formed an unholy alliance bent on obliterating the Constitution and establishing a country where every citizen is a suspect and is perpetually under the never-blinking eye of the government.

The establishment will likely continue construction of the surveillance state until the entire country is being watched around the clock and every monitored activity is recorded and made retrievable by agents who will have a dossier on every American.

The only permanent solution to the growth of government and the growth of its ability to monitor the online activity of Americans is to abolish every federal department and agency not specifically authorized by the U.S. Constitution or by laws passed by Congress which are in pursuance of Congress's constitutional power.

Finally, as almost every one of these despotic departments and agencies are organized under the executive branch of the federal government, they could be constitutionally abolished by the head of that branch: the president of the United States. If the president is unwilling to exercise his leadership in dismantling the departments under his control, then Congress could exercise its constitutional control over the budget to refuse to fund the agencies, leaving them to wither on the vine.



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