

Mass Surveillance [1]

We are asking [you to contact your Member of Parliament](#) [2] to ask them to support Early Day Motion 147. It need not take long, the important thing is you tell them how you feel on this issue. Not all MPs can sign EDMs, front benchers don't as a rule, but it is still important that you take this opportunity to let them know you care about mass surveillance.



"The expansion in the use of surveillance represents one of the most significant changes in the life of the nation since the end of the Second World War. Mass surveillance has the potential to erode privacy. As privacy is an essential pre-requisite to the exercise of individual freedom, its erosion weakens the constitutional foundations on which democracy and good governance have traditionally been based in this country." ([read more](#) [3])

The UK is one of the most watched societies in the west. Every one of us lives under with an incredible level of scrutiny and snooping every day. Our communications are collected, our movements tracked and our actions watched by the state and others. But there has been little discussion about whether this surveillance is appropriate or necessary. We know it isn't.

There has been far too little real political opposition to ever increasing monitoring. Even while the Liberal Democrat / Conservative Coalition [claimed it would reduce the 'database state'](#) [4] it continued to push for more monitoring and data collection. The Labour party has no credibility either, and apparently no will to change the current drive toward ever more intrusive surveillance. Quite the opposite, the Labour party has been as vocal in [promoting an ever increasing surveillance state](#) [5] as the current Government.

All of the above was true in 2011 and many pieces of the surveillance puzzle have been known about for a long time. Some of them like [Closed Circuit TV \(CCTV\)](#) [6] and [Automatic Numberplate Recognition \(ANPR\)](#) [7] are a part of our every day life, not because we were asked for consent, but because we didn't do enough to oppose them.

Things changed massively in 2013 following the Snowden revelations. When we talk about surveillance today, it is we have to remember that the only reason we know about the full extent of the snooping we live under is because [whistleblowers were brave enough to make that secret information public](#). [8]

Our governments [haven't been open with us](#) [9] about the broad focus of their surveillance or its scope and the machinery of surveillance is much bigger than we thought it was. Our government has hidden the truth from us, misled us when faced with evidence and we have had to [rely on leaks to find the truth](#) [10].

Video of pm7r7yC_91M

What you need to know: CCTV Monitoring

It is estimated the United Kingdom [is monitored by over 5.9 million CCTV cameras](#) [11]. That makes the UK the world leader in video monitoring. We are monitored in our city centres, whilst shopping, at transport hubs and whilst on trains and busses. It is almost impossible not to be captured on film on a daily basis. The worst part is that CCTV doesn't help to prevent crime, at best it moves it around..

Tracking Movements

ANPR cameras are used to monitor traffic movements and information is collected regardless of suspicion. Initially ANPR was introduced as a tool to spot stolen cars, but has since become a tool of mass surveillance. Since 2000 a nationwide network of roadside cameras connected to ANPR systems has [tracked, recorded, and stored](#) [12] the details of all journeys undertaken on major roads and through city centres. Movement data is stored for five years.

Public transport ticketing systems, like London's Oyster can and are used to track specific peoples movements. Over 22,000 requests have been made by the Metropolitan Police for information on people's movements and anonymous options for travel on public transport are becoming less and less available.

DNA & Biometrics

The British Police hold records of millions fingerprints and DNA samples on the National DNA Database. There is increasing use of roadside fingerprinting, an approach that may provide an additional incentive for the Police to make speculative arrests so that more fingerprints are held on the Database. It's not just the state using biometrics, concerns have also been raised over the unregulated use of [biometrics in schools](#) [13], affecting children as young as three.

Our Communications

In addition to the existing collection of phone records, plans were being made in 2008 to collect data on all phone calls, e-mails, chat room discussions and web-browsing habits as part of the Labour Government's Interception Modernisation Programme (and then the Coalition's '[Snoopers Charter](#) [14]'). The '[Snoopers Charter](#)' [15] would have required thousands of black box probes to be inserted into the UK's computer and telephone networks. The Snoopers Charter was [put on the shelf](#) [16] (but may well reappear) due to a public outcry.

However, mass surveillance programs above and beyond those used for law enforcement were revealed in 2013. Secret Snooping programmes include GCHQ's '[Tempora](#) [17]' and its '[Mastering the Internet](#) [18]' and '[Global Telecoms Exploitation](#) [19]' projects that together are used to grab recordings of telephone calls, the content of email messages, Facebook and other social media and the personal Internet history of users.

What we need to do.

- Halt suspicionless collection of data.
- Demand Transparency: Force the government to be open about the scope and scale of surveillance. We know that some surveillance and monitoring is necessary, but mass warrantless collection within the UK is unacceptable.
- Limit the retention of surveillance data and ensure it is deleted when the reason it was collected no longer applies.
- Put in place stronger data protection controls on both government and commercially collected data.

How you can help us do it.

- Make Mass surveillance an Election issue
- Join the 10s of thousands of voices - [sign the Pirate Party petition on mass surveillance](#) [20]

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- [12] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police-enforced_ANPR_in_the_UK
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