

TED TALK LESSON

HOW THE US GOVERNMENT SPIES ON PEOPLE WHO PROTEST – INCLUDING YOU

TEACHER'S NOTES

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Jennifer Granick at TEDxStanford

How the US government spies on people who protest — including you

https://www.ted.com/talks/jennifer_granick_how_the_us_government_spies_on_people_who_protest_including_you/up-next

Vocab matching answers

1. Advocate
2. Megalomaniacal
3. Surveillance
4. Libertarian
- 5 Bug
6. Activist
7. Faceprint
8. Pro-choice
9. Encryption
10. Funding
11. Plot
12. Fraudulent

Vocab gap-fill answers

1. plot
2. face print
3. activists
4. fraudulent
5. encryption
- 6 .bug
7. pro-choice
8. Libertarian
9. funding
10. surveillance
11. advocate
12. megalomaniacal

Ted Talk video answers

1. We are all activists now, and that means that we all have something to worry about from surveillance.
2. Surveillance means government collection and use of private and sensitive data about us.
3. Surveillance is essential to law enforcement and to national security.
4. The history of surveillance is one that includes surveillance abuses where this sensitive information has been used against people because of their race, their national origin, their sexual orientation, and in particular, because of their activism, their political beliefs.
5. About 53 years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I have a dream” speech on the Mall in Washington.
6. The legendary and notorious FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover believed, or wanted to believe, that the Civil Rights Movement was a Soviet communist plot intended to destabilize the American government.
7. Hoover had his agents put bugs in Dr. King’s hotel rooms, and those bugs picked up conversations between civil rights leaders talking about the strategies and tactics of the Civil Rights Movement. They also picked up sounds of Dr. King having sex with women who were not his wife.
8. Yes, he did. Throughout his decades at the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover enjoyed the support of the presidents that he served, Democratic and Republican alike.
9. J. Edgar Hoover saw the opportunity to discredit and undermine the Civil Rights Movement.
10. COINTELPRO and Watergate were a wake-up call for Americans. Surveillance was out of control and it was being used to squelch political challengers. And so Americans rose to the occasion and reformed surveillance law.
11. The primary tool Americans used to reform surveillance law was to require a search warrant for the government to be able to get access to their phone calls and their letters.

Warmer questions

- How much should the government know about you? Your salary? Your friends?
Where you travel each day?
- Can the government monitor what websites I visit?
- Google and Facebook, are they spying on you?
- What does the right to privacy mean to you?

Reading section

Fact or fiction?

Technology offers plenty of advances and conveniences but it also comes with the cost of privacy. The NSA (US National Security Agency), gives a prime example of this. Julian Assange, the WikiLeaks co-founder, states the NSA intercepts 98 percent of South American communications.

The classified US spying program was implemented by the NSA shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Since then, a lot of information has been released. This mass-surveillance program was first exposed by the New York Times in 2005.

Marc A Thiessen, Washington Post columnist, explains that there are three main methods to get information in order to prevent terrorist attacks:

- Interrogation (questioning)
- Penetration (infiltration)
- Intelligence (monitoring communications)

Recent disclosures reveal that the government of the United States tracks the calls of millions of US civilians and infiltrates text messages and emails on a regular basis. Those in support of the NSA argue that this measure is compulsory to identify any association with international terrorists. But detractors would say that it violates the citizens' right to both intimacy and privacy.



Who is spying?

Apart from the NSA, other organisations have been caught spying on the civilians. Outside of the United States, many governments have their own version of the NSA. The most prominent ones are:

- UK's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ)
- Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC)
- Australian Signals Directorate (ASD)

Tempora

British individuals are correspondingly concerned that their communications are being illegally accessed by UK intelligence services. In 2013, the US informer Edward Snowden revealed that the US and the UK security services consistently collect, process and store massive quantities of global digital communications, including phone calls, email messages, public posts and private messages on social networks, and internet histories.

The UK government has not openly accepted the existence of these mass-surveillance systems. The existence of Tempora, the mass-spying programme allegedly controlled by the Government Communications Headquarters, GCHQ, is neither confirmed nor denied. However, experts say that GCHQ's Tempora programme intercepts data in most of the fiber-optic communications cables in (and out) of the UK. And because a vast proportion of citizens' daily communications involve companies in the US –Yahoo Mail, Gmail, Outlook, and Facebook messages, for instance, it is almost certain that the data will travel through servers outside the UK. An outstanding thirty-six million people use Facebook in the UK. So, through social media use alone, GCHQ thus can keep track of more than half of the UK's population.

Questions which arise from this

- Are you confident that your government is not interested in knowing what you do online?
- Are there legitimate reasons to actively know what citizens are doing online?
- Has the meaning of true privacy changed over the last 50 years?



Vocabulary matching

Using the words on the left match them to their real definitions.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. Activist | a. A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy. |
| 2. Funding | b. A person who suffers delusions of their own power or importance. |
| 3. Pro-choice | c. Close observation, especially of a suspected spy or criminal. |
| 4. Advocate | d. A person who advocates civil liberty. |
| 5. Surveillance | e. A miniature microphone, typically concealed in a room or telephone, used for surveillance. |
| 6. Plot | f. A person who campaigns to bring about political or social change. |
| 7. Fraudulent | g. A digital scan or photograph of a human face, used for identifying individuals from the unique characteristics of facial structure. |
| 8. Megalomaniacal | h. Advocating legalised abortion. |
| 9. Bug | i. The process of converting information or data into code, especially to prevent unauthorized access. |
| 10. Face print | j. Money provided, especially by an organisation or government, for a particular purpose. |
| 11. Libertarian | k. A plan made in secret by a group of people to do something illegal or harmful. |
| 12. Encryption | l. Obtained, done by, or involving deception, especially criminal deception. |

Vocabulary gap-fill

1. A second attempt on the Senator's life prompts the Jedi Council to send Obi-Wan in search of those behind the assassination _____.
2. Certainly, the algorithms (that figure into an accurate _____) will improve greatly in the future.
3. The streets were packed full of _____ who were all chanting slogans in the hope to begin political change and stop further government intrusion into their privacy.
4. Many people don't understand the consequences of filing _____ tax returns.
5. The company promises industry-strength _____ for the security of your information on the password-protected site.
6. A _____ was placed in the ambassador's kitchen to listen to many private conversations.
7. "Life begins at conception," he said contentiously to the group of _____ protesters.
8. The free will which Leibnitz teaches is not _____ but determinist.
9. After the close of the war, efforts were first directed to clearing the financial situation by _____ the floating debt.
10. Captured by a British ship, he was taken to Malta and then to England, where he resided under some measure of _____ up to the peace of 1814.
11. Abraham Lincoln hated slavery and became an _____ of abolitionism.
12. He became _____ to whom no one dared offer a word of advice.

Video section

What's stopping the American government from recording your phone calls, reading your emails and monitoring your location? Very little, says surveillance and cybersecurity counsel Jennifer Granick. The government collects all kinds of information about you easily, cheaply and without a warrant – and if you've ever participated in a protest or attended a gun show, you're likely a person of interest. Learn more about your rights, your risks and how to protect yourself in the golden age of surveillance.

https://www.ted.com/talks/jennifer_granick_how_the_us_government_spies_on_people_who_protest_including_you/up-next



Watch the video and then answer the questions below

1. Who is an activist now?
2. What does surveillance mean?
3. Why is surveillance important?
4. What has the history of surveillance included?
5. What happened about 53 years ago?
6. What did J. Edgar Hoover think about the Civil Rights Movement?
7. What did Hoover do against Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.?
8. Did Hoover enjoy the support of the presidents that he served?
9. Why did Hoover do that?
10. What did COINTELPRO and Watergate represent?
11. What was the primary tool Americans used to reform surveillance law?

Disadvantages of government surveillance

1. Government surveillance makes the world safer. When individuals are constantly monitored, they feel more protected than when they are not. Government surveillance makes a country safer while holding criminals more accountable for their actions.
2. Mass surveillance does work. Terrorist attacks are constantly stopped thanks to government surveillance. Mass surveillance deters criminals and terrorists as it works in favour of the government and leads to the detection of criminal activity. Spying programmes help in the fight against terrorists and make sure that citizens are safe.
3. Countless lives have been saved thanks to mass-spying programs. In 2017, the UK government announced that it managed to prevent 13 terrorist attacks in the past 5 years, in part due to surveillance. France reports similar success.
4. Government surveillance contributes to research. Criminals and terrorists cannot be identified in real time. And, without bulk intelligence collection, there would be no possible way to track and connect terrorists' criminal movements.
5. Surveillance is key for societal control in Western societies. The idea that the government is always watching actually creates a common fear and becomes a mechanism for controlling citizens. It is proven to be more effective than brute force.
6. Mass-spying programmes infringe on people's privacy. Public abuse is inherently a citizen's right to know about. Taxes and corruption are public issues which need to be disclosed –because citizens are the ones who pay for public services. But what happens outside the public space is the individuals' right to keep as private.
7. “Big Brother”. The increasing capacity of the government to spy on their citizens' lives grows by the second. By tracking their citizens' every move or listening to their conversations, governments risk becoming oppressive and totalitarian regimes.
8. The government uses the collected information for its own benefit. Some detractors argue that the information gathered through surveillance could be used by the government –and even by private organisations– for political purposes. Through intelligence collection, a government can predict voting patterns and use them to their advantage. Also, the collected data on important business people, political leaders, and regular citizens could be used against them at some point.
9. There is no hard evidence to prove that extra mass-surveillance helps in fighting crime. Some people claim that there is no real evidence to show that the surveillance of the citizens is actually working. The Boston marathon bombers were, for example, in a location monitored by lots of cameras and yet these terrorists were not prevented or deterred from committing their act or terror.
10. Technology hackers could gain access to government surveillance programmes and provide them to rival governments, companies or organised crime groups. By demanding or creating back doors into encrypted systems, national security agencies have weakened internet security for their citizens.

Advantages of government surveillance

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Task

How many more points can you think of that are related to the topic? Write your thoughts below and then discuss in your group.

Extended discussion questions

1. Is the NSA spying on Americans civilians for security purposes only?
2. Shouldn't the government surveillance programmes be subject to public examination?
3. Does mass surveillance follow a criterion of accountability?
4. Are there better alternatives other than mass surveillance?
5. Does the alleged security these programmes deliver justify the infringement of privacy and personal liberties?
6. What happens if the surveillance technology is hacked and sold on to unscrupulous states?
7. Is government surveillance used to quietly oppress peaceful dissenting opinions?
8. Is the government using mass surveillance to deter political opponents and journalists?

Potential debating topics

1. Please, spy on me! I'd rather be safe than private.
2. Don't you dare to spy on me, surveillance is publicly worthless.
3. Building the capacity to collect and store the communications of every civilian is a capability open for abuse.
4. Governments could progressively become the "Big Brothers" of an authoritarian dystopian society -like the one described by George Orwell in "1984".
5. The NSA surveillance system is a xenophobic-based system that targets foreigners.
6. The NSA mass-surveillance programme protects every civilian alike.
7. Tempora surveillance system spies on everyone, except on its spies.
8. Terrorists make use of our communications infrastructure. If we don't allow our governments to use data to do the corresponding counter-intelligence, what is the alternative?
9. The end justifies the means. Terror must be stopped, no matter how.
10. Excessive surveillance is not necessarily making us safer.
11. Privacy is overestimated. Civilians would rather give up some of their privacy so as to be protected.
12. Governments use probable terrorist attacks as an excuse to unlawfully suppress dissenting yet legitimate democratic protests.
13. Mass-spying systems are not being executed with grounds for suspicion, they are rather being carried out to find the grounds for suspicion.



DEBATING PLANS

PREMIUM 30-PAGE DEBATING LESSONS ON DOZENS OF TOPICS

These lessons are extensive and includes a magazine-like introduction, a 2-page article, vocabulary section, grammar exercises, and images for discussion. To help students organize their debate, worksheets are included for appropriate language and pros and cons to get them started. In total these lesson plans offer 30 pages of activities and tasks for students.

Environmental Crimes

Debate Lesson Plan

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Should natural features be given legal rights to protect them from pollution? This debate will target issues relating to how to legally protect the environment and criminalise pollution.

Food Tax

Debate Lesson Plan

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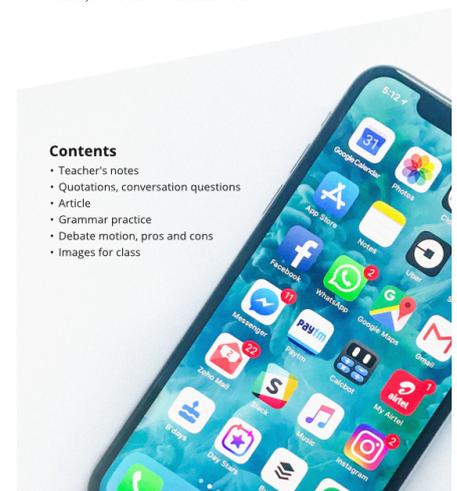


What are the best ways to tackle obesity? Some people advocate better food education, while others want to tax people to change their spending habits. Which is the most effective?

Social Media

Debate Lesson Plan

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People are becoming increasingly concerned about social media. Discuss the main issues and find out what your students think and why.