

Jurius

## What happens with the WWW after the NSA?

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In connection with the special issue of Jusletter IT on the NSA scandal published on 15 May 2014, we have conducted an online survey with the title «What happens with the WWW after the NSA?» among our readers. The results are not representative, however, show a clear trend.

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Category: News

Field of law: Data Protection; Data Security

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[Rz 1] At the beginning we asked, if the participants would be worried that the survey will be done online and up to what point their sensibility goes in such a case. As it happens, some readers have already completed the survey here. But also the opposite view has been stated.

«The (digital) social life is full of dirt and dangers. Those, who fear this, must withdraw from life.»

[Rz 2] According to our readers the main threats for the internet consist in the concentration of power in a few companies, which can lead to powerlessness of the individual. The anonymous access of criminals has also been mentioned.

«The main threat for the internet is, that technic, economic and governmental possibilities are developing faster than the ambitions of regulating the use of the internet positively. And often there seems to be only choosing between pest and cholera — see terrorism contra supervision or child pornography contra censorship.»

[Rz 3] Furthermore, we asked how much control of the state is necessary and if the protection of privacy, copyright et cetera should overrule the unrestricted internet usage.

«Adjustment — yes, constant supervision — no.»

«In my eyes there shouldn't be much more control by the state, government and administration. Everybody should protect him/herself, including internet security software, however comprehensive information should get started by the responsible authorities or companies for all citizens.»

«I think that the government is not able to solve the problem of data protection with surveillance. The state should invest in the creation of media competences of the citizens, so they will become more cautious regarding the disclosure of data. I am all in favour of free internet access.»

«The government should control the least possible — but as much as actually necessary.»

«There is no easy answer to this question, it has to be negotiated in an open, transparent and democratic process. Increased freedom leads to more security. Increased regulation produces economic interest in great criminal business.»

«Overall legal monitoring by the government.»

[Rz 4] Generally, our readers see the threats for sensible data primarily in social networks, since private data is shared without the awareness of it being openly accessible. The constant storing of sensible data also contributes to the threat.»

«For me, the biggest threat is where sensible data is collected on a large scale in relation with other contexts, e.g. health or employment. This offers even greater options for excessive surveillance of the concerned persons.»

[Rz 5] Asking what the state law can do for the safety in the net and for the Internet intrinsically, the participants were relatively united. They require rules that should actually be obeyed and — as the case may be — enforced with possible sanctions. Technical standards and self-regulation may not produce the intended results for the internet.

«I presume that technical standards and self-regulation may theoretically lead to the intended results, in fact, however, complete protection and complete privacy are never possible, which for example WikiLeaks shows very clearly.»

[Rz 6] Another issue that provoked a similar opinion is what the individual can do to avoid being completely powerless in the current situation:

- The handling of personal data must be done more carefully.
- The data to be protected should not be uploaded to the internet, and the personal profile must be regularly reviewed.
- Services and data entries should be renounced.
- One should strive towards self-enlightenment.
- The power of the consumer must be played off.
- The own interests should be positioned in the political process.