

AT&T's Role in Dragnet Surveillance of Millions of Its Customers

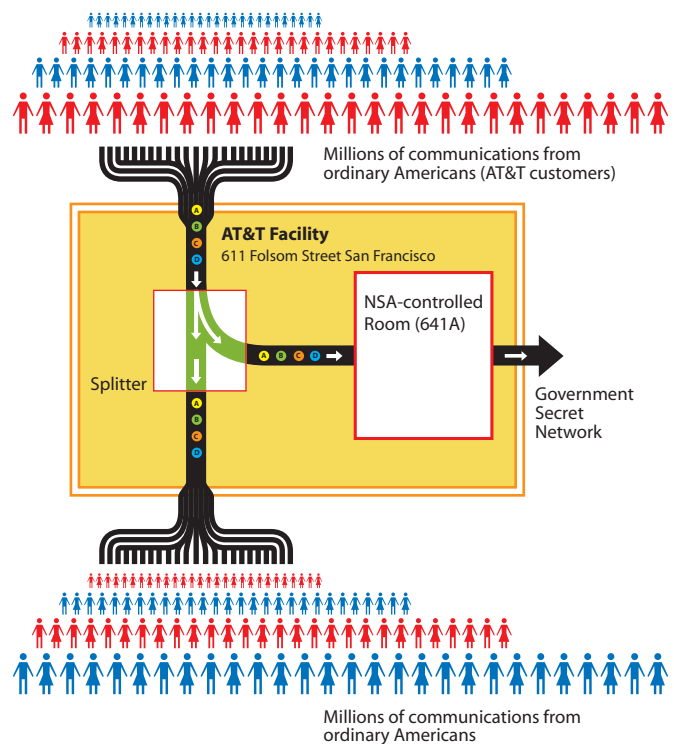
INTERNET SPYING IN SAN FRANCISCO¹

AT&T's internet traffic in San Francisco runs through fiber-optic cables at an AT&T facility located at 611 Folsom Street in San Francisco. Using a device called a "splitter" a complete copy of the internet traffic that AT&T receives – email, web browsing requests, and other electronic communications sent to or from the customers of AT&T's WorldNet Internet service from people who use another internet service provider – is diverted onto a separate fiber-optic cable which is connected to a room, known as the SG-3 room, which is controlled by the NSA. The other copy of the traffic continues onto the internet to its destination.

The SG-3 room was created under the supervision of the NSA, and contains powerful computer equipment connecting to separate networks. This equipment is designed to analyze communications at high speed, and can be programmed to review and select out the contents and traffic patterns of communications according to user-defined rules. Only personnel with NSA clearances – people assisting or acting on behalf of the NSA – have access to this room.

AT&T's deployment of NSA-controlled surveillance capability apparently involves considerably more locations than would be required to catch only international traffic. The evidence of the San Francisco room is consistent with an overall national AT&T deployment to from 15 to 20 similar sites, possibly more. This implies that a substantial fraction, probably well over half, of AT&T's purely domestic traffic was diverted to the NSA. At the same time, the equipment in the room is well suited to the capture and analysis of large volumes of data for purposes of surveillance.

Intercepting Communications at AT&T Folsom Street Facility



¹ This is a brief summary of the testimony of Mark Klein, a former AT&T technician, and of expert witness J. Scott Marcus, a former Senior Advisor for Internet Technology at the FCC. The complete declaration of Mark Klein is available at http://www.eff.org/legal/cases/att/SER_klein_decl.pdf. The declaration of J. Scott Marcus is available at http://www.eff.org/legal/cases/att/SER_marcus_decl.pdf.