

DNI'S LATEST "I CON" SPEAK: "SIFT THROUGH AND HAVE UNFETTERED ACCESS TO"

The Director of National Intelligence, after having repeatedly refused to answer any questions about the WSJ's big scoop in [yesterday's conference call](#), [has released a new document](#) pretending to debunk stories based on the WSJ (though not the WSJ itself). It reads, in part,

Press reports based on an article published in today's Wall Street Journal mischaracterize aspects of NSA's activities conducted under Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The NSA does not sift through and have unfettered access to 75% of the United States' online communications.

The following are the facts:

- *Media reports based upon the recent Wall Street Journal (WSJ) article regarding NSA's foreign intelligence activities provide an inaccurate and misleading picture of NSA's collection programs, but especially with respect to NSA's use of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act*

(FISA).

- *The reports leave readers with the impression that NSA is sifting through as much as 75% of the United States' online communications, which is simply not true.*
- *In its foreign intelligence mission, and using all its authorities, NSA "touches" about 1.6%, and analysts only look at 0.00004%, of the world's internet traffic.*

Obviously, the government partly obscures its answer by presenting the global numbers when trying to debunk US numbers.

But more importantly, it builds a gigantic straw man with its "sift through and have unfettered access to" language. That's not [what the WSJ said](#) (which is why DNI shifts its accusation).

The system has the capacity to reach roughly 75% of all U.S. Internet traffic in the hunt for foreign intelligence, including a wide array of communications by foreigners and Americans. In some cases, it retains the written content of emails sent between citizens within the U.S. and also filters domestic phone calls made with Internet technology, these people say.

[snip]

The surveillance system is built on relationships with telecommunications

| carriers that together cover about 75%
of U.S. Internet communications.

The NSA doesn't do all the sifting. The telecoms Americans are paying every month do the first sift (which means part of that 75% of US Internet traffic is inaccessible to the NSA).

But see what DNI doesn't ever do? Refute the WSJ.

Which I assume means we can take as confirmation that the government and its pseudo-private partners the telecoms do, in fact, sift through 75% of US Internet traffic.