

Research: Two-thirds of Brits think Snooper's Charter extracts are from dystopian fiction

By Ryan Daws

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Last month [we reported](#) that 73 percent of Brits are "completely unaware" of the Investigatory Power Bill, also known as the Snooper's Charter. Research from popular VPN service, HideMyAss, has revealed that when presented with extracts from the bill, two-thirds of Brits thought it was from dystopian fiction such as 1984, Brave New World, The Hunger Games, and The Matrix.

Once upon a time, authors like George Orwell imagined a world in which everyone's activities were monitored with far-reaching surveillance. Those of us who have followed surveillance matters will be more desensitised when presented with extracts from investigatory bills, although this research makes it clear that most of the general population still believe such powers to be a work of fiction.

Joseph Cannataci, UN Special Rapporteur on Privacy, said that surveillance in the UK is already worse than depicted in Orwell's 1984 novel: "If you look at CCTV alone, at least [Winston Smith in Orwell's novel] was able to go out in the countryside and go under a tree and expect there wouldn't be any screen, as it was called. Today there are many parts of the English countryside where there are more cameras than George Orwell could ever have imagined. So the situation in some cases is far worse already."

Privacy activist Edward Snowden released sensitive documents about the NSA (National Security Agency) in the US detailing their mass surveillance programme, but Cannataci believes the UK is even worse due to poor oversight.

"Snowden will continue to be looked upon as a traitor by some and a hero by others, but in actual fact his revelations confirmed to many of us who have been working in this field for a long time what has been going on, and the extent to which it has gone out of control," Cannataci said.

On average, one in five of those (20%) suspected the quotes derived from George Orwell's 1984, one in ten (10%) thought they were from Enemy of the State, and 7% believed the quotes were from The Hunger Games. What's more, 8% of those polled even believed the quotes were from North Korean propaganda.

Danvers Baillieu, COO at [HideMyAss](#), said: "The Snooper's Charter is bewildering in its current form and would allow the government to pry into our lives via technology that has seriously sinister abilities. Whilst we're not suggesting that Theresa May is quite as manipulative as The Hunger Games' President Snow, the fact remains that the Snooper's Charter has little regard for our privacy, and is therefore unsurprisingly difficult to distinguish from dystopian fiction."

What are your thoughts on the Snooper's Charter? Let us know in the comments.

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