

Presenter:

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Title:

SIGINT for Anyone: The Growing Availability of Signals Intelligence in the Public Domain

Abstract:

This presentation examines nongovernmental approaches and technologies that allow private citizens to conduct signals intelligence (SIGINT) activities. RAND researchers relied on publicly available information to identify SIGINT capabilities in the open market and to describe the intelligence value each capability provides to users.

This presentation would explore the implications their findings have on privacy, the ability of individuals to collect information on other individuals, and implications for the U.S. and allied governments.

The team explored four technology areas where nongovernmental SIGINT is flourishing:

- Maritime domain awareness
- Radio frequency (RF) spectrum mapping
- Eavesdropping, jamming, and hijacking of satellite systems
- Cyber surveillance

We then provide areas where further research and debate is needed to create legal, regulatory, policy, process, and human capital solutions to the challenges these new capabilities provide.

This was an exploratory effort, rather than a comprehensive research endeavor. The team relied on unclassified and publicly available materials to find examples of capabilities that challenge the government-only paradigm. We identified ways these capabilities and trends may affect the U.S. government in terms of emerging threats, policy implications, technology repercussions, human capital considerations, and financial effects. Finally, we identified areas for future study for U.S. and allied government leaders to respond to these changes.

Publication:

A final report has been approved and cleared for publication, and will be published by RAND Corporation (www.rand.org) before the end of the year. This work has never before been presented outside of RAND.