



Is Big Data turning into 'Big Brother?'

By Michael Liedtke
AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) – With every phone call they make and every Web excursion they take, people are leaving a digital trail of revealing data that can be tracked by profit-seeking companies and terrorist-hunting government officials. The revelations that the National Security Agency is perusing millions of U.S.

customer phone records at Verizon Communications and snooping on the digital communications stored by nine major Internet services illustrate how aggressively personal data is being collected and analyzed.

Verizon is handing over so-called metadata, excerpts from millions of U.S. customer records, to the NSA under an order issued by the secretive Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, according to a report in the British newspaper

The Guardian. The report was confirmed Thursday by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Former NSA employee William Binney told the Associated Press that he estimates the agency collects records on 3 billion phone calls each day.

The NSA and FBI appear to be looking even wider under a clandestine program code-named "PRISM" that was revealed in stories posted late Thursday by *The*

Washington Post and *The Guardian*.

PRISM gives the U.S. government access to email, documents, audio, video, photographs and other data belonging to foreigners on foreign soil who are under investigation, according to *The Washington Post*. The newspaper said it reviewed a confidential roster of companies and services participating in PRISM. The companies included AOL Inc., Apple Inc., Facebook Inc., Google Inc., Microsoft Corp., Yahoo Inc., Skype, YouTube

and Paltalk.

In statements, Apple, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Yahoo, AOL and Paltalk all said they only provide the government with user data required under the law. (Google runs YouTube and Microsoft owns Skype.)

The NSA isn't getting customer names or the content of phone conversations under the Verizon court order, but that

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SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Construction workers (above) worked to smooth concrete as it was poured for a new driveway at Kansas Quickwash – formerly Majic Spray – Thursday morning. No construction job is complete without observers, and two workers found a minute to do just that (below).

New concrete paves driveway

By Sam Dieter
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After several months of remodeling work, the car wash downtown is opening soon under a new name.

"It kind of depends on when they get the driveway poured," Patrick Toth, owner of Kansas Quick Lube, said of when it will open.

Concrete was poured Thursday morning at the old Majic Spray car wash located on Fourth Street between Mission Ridge and Chickamauga avenues. Toth bought the car wash in December and let it run in January and February before shutting it down for a remodel in March.

"We've done an awful lot to it," he said, adding that "basically we reused the brick."

New machines, plumbing, water pumps and hoses were added to the car wash, which has one automatic and three self-serve washing units. A vacuum near one of the units will be replaced by four in the driveway. Toth said people have been using the automatic unit for several weeks now.



The exterior facade was also changed, including even the sign in front of the car wash. "Kansas Quick Wash" will be fully open for business two weeks after the new driveway is poured, to give the concrete time to harden, Toth said. That should be near the end of this month.

The new carwash will have the same num-

ber of units as it had under its old name, Toth said, and the driveway to allow cars to enter through the backside is the main improvement. Some landscaping work is planned for the area around the driveway.

"Hopefully it will be a little more attractive from that end, fourth street downtown," he said.

Board learns state aid to stay stable

By Sam Dieter
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The Colby School Board heard a report at its monthly meeting Monday that the state legislature ended its spring session without making any big changes for schools in Kansas.

Superintendent Terrel Harrison reported to the board at the meeting Monday night that the legislature finally wrapped up its spring session. The legislature passed a two-year budget that keeps funding for public education at roughly the same level as it is now, with \$3,838 in base state aid per pupil. She said the state's common core standards system survived a bill presented by Sen. Ty Masterson, which passed in the Senate but failed in a vote in the House with a 55 to 58 vote, and she thanked state Rep. Ward Cassidy and state Sen. Don Hineman for representing the school district.

In other business:
• Athletic Director Larry Gabel said the baseball team lost to Goodland in the regionals last month, but the softball team made it through several games before they lost to Pratt.

"Pratt is a very very good team," he said. "I think our kids did an excellent job just getting there."

As for the track team, he reported that three boys and seven girls qualified for the state meet in Wichita, including Andrew

Taylor, Wyatt Binder and Beau Brown for the boys, and Hannah Strange, Andrea Browne, Brielle McKee, Kaitlyn Flanagan, Sydney Stephens and Karly Shull for the girls. Katie Elias was selected as an alternate for the relay team.

He also mentioned that the school will be needing a number of new coaches, whose contracts were approved later in the meeting.

• Lance Krannawitter, the grade school principal, said the school has been working on organizing and getting staff hired to replace teachers who quit, with a lot of effort going into the math program particularly. When staff who resigned were interviewed, he said, teachers did not voice dissatisfaction with the school itself, but were simply moving on to a new assignment.

• Middle School Principal Rob Ross mentioned the heating and cooling equipment that was removed from the top of the roof of the school, part of an overhaul of the school's heating and cooling system and other energy upgrades that the school voted on earlier in the year. He said he was impressed with how much smaller the new equipment was.

He also said the school wants to have a class for referees and officials at athletic games, and is looking for another school to share the class. He added later that

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Pickup rolls over

Two Oakley boys went to the hospital Thursday after the pickup they were in rolled into a ditch at the southern edge of Thomas County.

Samuel A. Gallagher, 16, was driving 1989 Chevrolet C 1500 pickup east on County Road A, according to the Kansas Highway Patrol, which worked the accident.

He took the curve where that road meets County Road 32 too fast and rolled the pickup once in the east ditch. Gallagher and his passenger Trey W. Hayden, also 16, went to Logan County Hospital with what the patrol called a possible injuries. Both were wearing seatbelts.

Accused ex-lawman returns to stand

By Roxana Hegeman
Associated Press

KINGMAN (AP) – A former Kansas lawman has told jurors in his first-degree murder trial about the early morning phone call he got from his wife telling him he needed to get their boys or they might get hurt.

Brett Seacat testified today about the April 2011 death of Vashti Seacat and the fire that engulfed their Kingman home. He and the couple's two young sons escaped the fire.

The 37-year-old testified he was sleeping on the couch in their home when his wife called him on the phone from an upstairs bedroom. He said he heard a loud crackling and then popping sound as he ran upstairs.

He testified he picked up her body off the bed and dropped it as he realized she was dead and the house was on fire.

Brett Seacat, 37, is charged with first degree murder in the April 2011 shooting death of Vashti Seacat. Prosecutors say Seacat wrote a fake suicide note for his

wife, then shot her and set their home on fire. Defense lawyers say Seacat's 34-year-old wife set the house alight then shot herself.

Seacat, of Kingman, is also charged with aggravated arson and two counts of child endangerment. The Seacats' two children were at home and asleep when the fire started. They were not hurt.

Today, his second day of testimony, Seacat haltingly told jurors how he had threatened his wife that evening when he realized she intended to go through with a contested divorce. He testified that he told her he would expose her affairs with two managers at the cable company where she worked so she would be fired. He said he threatened to publish private photos of her.

"For 19 years, I was the one who protected Vashti," Seacat said. "Finally I pushed her into what I was protecting her from."

He told the jury how he met Vashti when he was competing at a wrestling tournament. They were both in high school – he was 16, she 15 – and they began to date the next day.

"On several occasions I stopped her from doing something I don't think I am allowed to talk about," Seacat testified.

The comment – an apparent reference to previous suicide attempts and fires Vashti allegedly set – prompted prosecutors to object. Judge Larry Solomon ordered jurors to ignore the statement and immediately called a recess.

Brett Seacat testified for nearly two hours Thursday about his work as a police instructor and a Sedgewick County sheriff's deputy. He also talked about his wife's moods swings over their impending divorce, saying she could not decide if she wanted them to separate or reconcile.

A key piece of evidence is the suicide note prosecutors say Seacat traced. Prosecutors have introduced as evidence an overhead projector he used at work that day, along with burned computer hard drives and discarded cellphones.

But Seacat matter-of-factly explained to jurors that he needed the projector to examine an exercise he had presented three weeks earlier in a class.

He said he burned the hard drives at the maintenance shop because he planned to sell some old laptops to raise money and showed a receipt for a new hard drive he had purchased months earlier. He said he discarded

the old phones to prevent identity theft after briefly considering whether to sell them as well.

Ready for the sack race



CARMEL SUMMERS/Sacred Heart School

Sacred Heart fifth graders Ryan Voss (left), Ryan Westcott, Mandy Summers and Meghann Elling lined up for a sack race at their Field Day in May. Some of their events were more athletic, like running relays. Others, like this one, were just for fun.

