

## ANGLAIS

En vous appuyant uniquement sur les documents du dossier thématique qui vous est proposé, vous rédigerez une synthèse répondant à la question suivante :

« *How is control exerted by the various actors of the American surveillance society?* »

Votre synthèse comportera entre 450 et 500 mots. La synthèse devra être précédée d'un titre et les candidats devront indiquer le nombre de mots comptés en fin de copie.

### Liste des documents :

1. "The Surveillance Society", Adam L. Penenberg, *Wired*, December 1, 2001
2. "As Orwell's 1984 Turns 70 It Predicted Much Of Today's Surveillance Society", Kalev Leetaru, *forbes.com*, May 6, 2019
3. "The Spying That Changed Big Tech", Shira Ovide, *The New York Times*, September 16, 2021
4. "Lawmakers From Both Sides Take Aim at Big Tech Executives", *nytimes.com*, July 29, 2020. Photograph by Graeme Jennings.
5. "Americans and Privacy: Concerned, Confused and Feeling Lack of Control Over Their Personal Information", Pew Research Center, November 15, 2019

## Document 1

### **The Surveillance Society**

Adapted from Adam L. Penenberg, *Wired*, December 1, 2001

Within hours of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Attorney General John Ashcroft pulled together a host of antiterrorism measures. Days later, the attorney general sent to Capitol Hill a bill that would make it easier for the government to tap cell phones and pagers, give the Feds broad authority to monitor email and Web browsing, strengthen money-laundering laws, and weaken immigrants' rights. And high above it all would sit an Office of Homeland Security, run by former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, who would report directly to the Oval Office<sup>1</sup>.

The terrorist assault on America shifted the balance between privacy and security. What was considered Orwellian one week seemed perfectly reasonable - even necessary - the next. Politicians who routinely clashed now show complete agreement with one another. "When you're in this type of conflict - when you're at war - civil liberties are treated differently," said Senate Republican Trent Lott. "This event will change the balance between freedom and security," echoed House Democrat Richard Gephardt.

But truth be told, the US was embracing the Surveillance Society well before September 11. In the name of safety, we have grown increasingly comfortable with cameras monitoring us whenever we stop to buy a Slurpee, grab cash from an ATM, or park in a downtown lot. And in the name of convenience, we've happily accepted a range of products and services, from cell phones to credit cards to Web browsers that make our lives easier and have the secondary effect of permitting us to be tracked. They're not spy technologies - but they might as well be.

Americans don't seem to be frightened by these incursions. "Apparently, consumers don't feel their privacy is threatened," says Barbara Bellissimo, owner of a no longer existing website that offered anonymous Web browsing.

For now, the information about each of us resides in dozens of separate databases owned by the credit card companies, the phone carriers, the rental car agencies and police departments, the ISPs<sup>2</sup> and the IRS<sup>3</sup>. But the aftermath of September 11 could change all that by creating in many of us an appetite for information and a willingness to be monitored. And this raises a disquieting possibility: Will the disparate elements of our surveillance society be assembled into a surveillance web? Will the private companies and the government agencies come together to create a superdatabase accessible to ... who? Will it strip us not just of personal privacy - we seem resigned, even OK, with that - but of public anonymity?

Worrying is a waste of time. Surveillance is here. It was inevitable. But the surveillance state is not.

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<sup>1</sup> The Oval Office is the office of the President of the United States.

<sup>2</sup> Internet Service Providers

<sup>3</sup> "The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the revenue service of the United States federal government, which is responsible for collecting taxes." ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internal\\_Revenue\\_Service](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internal_Revenue_Service))

## Document 2

### As Orwell's 1984 Turns 70 It Predicted Much Of Today's Surveillance Society

Adapted from Kalev Leetaru, forbes.com, May 6, 2019

George Orwell's famous novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* turns 70 years old next month. It turns out Orwell's predictions were frighteningly accurate.

In 1984, it was the state that determined what constituted acceptable speech in keeping society orderly.

In 2019, it is a small cadre of private companies in Silicon Valley and their executives that wield absolute power over what we are permitted to see and say online.

In 1984, there were just a few countries to which most of the world's citizens belonged.

In 2019, there are just a few social media empires to which most of the world's netizens belong.

In 1984, it was the state that conducted surveillance and censored speech.

In 2019, social media companies deploy vast armies of human and algorithmic moderators that surveil their users 24/7, flagging those that commit thoughtcrimes<sup>4</sup> and deleting their violations from existence. Those that commit too many thoughtcrimes are banished to "unperson"<sup>5</sup> status by these same private companies, without any intervention or even in contradiction with the will of the state and without any right to appeal.

In 1984, ever-present "telescreens" act as both information conveyor and surveillance device and saturate both public and private spaces with cameras and microphones monitored by the government.

In 2019, smartphones take on this role, acting as both our window to the digital world and the means through which myriad private companies from data brokers<sup>6</sup> to social media companies themselves surveil our every action. Yet, our world goes far beyond the one imagined by Orwell in which every device from our watches to our refrigerators, our thermostats to our toasters, are increasingly Internet-connected and streaming a realtime documentary of our lives back to these private surveillance empires.

In 1984, it was the state that made use of its vast surveillance empire to maintain order.

In 2019, a landscape of private companies so large it is almost uncountable, monitors, monetizes and manipulates us.

In 1984, the ultimate goal of the massive surveillance empire is to sustain and entrench the power of the state.

In 2019, the ultimate goal of the online world's massive surveillance empire is to sustain and entrench the power of social media companies.

Indeed, the similarities are nearly as endless as the words of the book.

Putting this all together, 70 years after *1984's* publication, it seems nearly every aspect of Orwell's commentary on the surveillance state has come true. The only difference is that

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<sup>4</sup> In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, committing thoughtcrime means "thinking something that violates the government's prescribed beliefs." (Jeffrey Somers, "'1984' Vocabulary", thoughtco.com, April 24, 2019)

<sup>5</sup> In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, an unperson is "a person about whom all evidence of their existence is erased, typically after they are convicted of a crime and executed." (Jeffrey Somers, "'1984' Vocabulary", thoughtco.com, April 24, 2019)

<sup>6</sup> A data broker: "a person or company whose business is selling information about companies, markets, etc." (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/data-broker>)

Orwell saw surveillance and control as the domain of the state, whereas in reality the surveillance world we have come to know is one of private companies monitoring, monetizing and manipulating society for nothing more than commercial gain.

### Document 3

#### **The Spying That Changed Big Tech**

Adapted from Shira Ovide, *The New York Times*, September 16, 2021

*The backlash against the industry traces back partly to the Snowden revelations.*

I want to rewind to a recent point in history when the United States government snooped on American technology companies. It helps us more fully understand the current climate of mistrust between Big Tech, U.S. politicians and the American public.

In 2013, reporting by *The Washington Post* — based on documents from the former U.S. government contractor Edward J. Snowden — revealed that the National Security Agency and its British counterpart had essentially hacked a great deal of information from customers of Google, Yahoo and other American internet companies without those companies' knowledge.

Reasonable people can argue over whether the N.S.A. was justified in using this and other programs to siphon billions of pieces of information from phone calls, texts, emails and other digital records in the mission to defend the United States from terrorists. The reporting on the documents, by numerous news organizations, set off a public debate on the balance of privacy rights, the rule of law and national security.

I want to focus on the ways that those revelations of U.S. government snooping altered the technology that we use and ended the post-9/11 cooperation between the federal government and tech giants — for good and for ill.

First, that 2013 article in *The Washington Post* set off shock waves in Silicon Valley. Tech executives in public or (mostly) in private said that the N.S.A. hacking was a betrayal — a step way too far in the name of national security.

Tech company customers also worried about the possibility that information from their emails or sensitive documents might end up in the hands of U.S. spies — either through the tech companies' compliance with legal U.S. government orders or by sneaking through Big Tech's back doors.

The tech companies' most visible response was to bring secure technology into the mainstream. Companies including Google, Microsoft and Yahoo sped up their use of encrypted technologies that scramble the content of messages or phone calls so that anyone who snoops on them can access only gibberish.

Encryption is one of thorniest technologies in the world, because it both protects ordinary people's communications from prying eyes and makes criminals harder to track.

The trust gap between tech giants and leaders in the United States and other countries was probably inevitable, and in many ways it's healthy. Companies such as Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple are so rich and their products are so essential in our lives that they have become nearly as powerful as governments. It's reasonable to weigh whether Big Tech needs more government oversight.

Tech companies are responsible for the enmity, yes, but the government's willingness to intrude on American companies is partly to blame, too.

## Document 4

### Lawmakers From Both Sides Take Aim at Big Tech Executives

nytimes.com, July 29, 2020

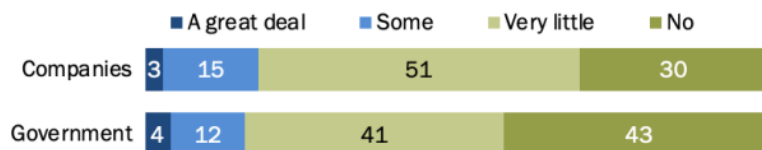


Mark Zuckerberg, the Facebook C.E.O., testifies before a US House of Representatives subcommittee. Photograph by Graeme Jennings

## Document 5

### Majority of Americans say they have little to no control over the data that companies or the government collect about them

% of U.S. adults who say they have \_\_\_ control over data collected about them by ...



Note: Respondents were randomly assigned to answer a question about how much control they feel they have over data collected about them by “companies” or “the government.” Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted June 3-17, 2019.

“Americans and Privacy: Concerned, Confused and Feeling Lack of Control Over Their Personal Information”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

### “Americans and Privacy: Concerned, Confused and Feeling Lack of Control Over Their Personal Information”

Pew Research Center, Washington D.C., November 15, 2019