

NSA has long role as top US locksmith, lock-picker

September 11 2013, by Jack Gillum



This photo, taken June 9, 2013, in Hong Kong, provided by The Guardian Newspaper in London shows Edward Snowden, who worked as a contract employee at the National Security Agency. Civilian U.S. government scientists worried even a generation ago about the National Security Agency's role in developing global communications standards, according to documents reviewed by The Associated Press. Some scientists wondered why the NSA appeared to choose weaker standards then classified its explanation as top secret. (AP Photo/The Guardian)

More than two decades ago, civilian government scientists were expressing concerns with the National Security Agency's role in

developing global communications standards.

Declassified documents reviewed by The Associated Press show that tensions involving [secrecy](#) and national security emerged in the 1990s when the government's standards agency worked with the NSA to create code for digitally signing documents. That proposed standard was initially criticized by industry experts for being flawed.

The review comes after recent revelations that showed the NSA deliberately weakened Internet encryption in recent years as part of its effort to gather and analyze digital intelligence. The National Institute of Standards and Technology says it is reassuring the public of the safety of its data under government-approved encryption standards.

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