

Robot Snowden promises more US spying revelations

March 18 2014, by Glenn Chapman



A member of the Avaaz online community organization wears a "Snowden" mask in Brasilia, on February 13, 2014

Former intelligence contractor Edward Snowden emerged from his Russian exile Tuesday in the form of a remotely-controlled robot to promise more sensational revelations about US spying programs.

The fugitive's face appeared on a screen as he maneuvered the wheeled

android around a stage at the TED gathering, addressing an audience in Vancouver without ever leaving his secret hideaway.

"There are absolutely more revelations to come," he said. "Some of the most important reporting to be done is yet to come."

Snowden, a former National Security Agency contractor who has been charged in the United States with espionage, dismissed the [public debate](#) about whether he is a heroic whistleblower or traitor.

Instead, he used the conference organized by educational non-profit organization TED ("Technology Entertainment Design"), to call for people worldwide to fight for privacy and Internet freedom.

Internet creator Tim Berners-Lee briefly joined Snowden's interview with TED curator Chris Anderson, and came down in the hero camp.

When Anderson posed the question to the TED audience—known for famous, innovative, and influential attendees—the idea that Snowden was a force for good met with applause.

Hero or traitor?

"Hero patriot or traitor; I would say I am an American citizen just like anyone else," Snowden said.

"What really matters here is the kind of government we want; the kind of Internet we want."

He says he was inspired to pass a huge trove of NSA files to reporters when he saw Us spying tactics going too far and intruding into the private data of millions of Internet and telephone customers.

Snowden argued that if he had gone to the US Congress with his concerns he would have risked being "buried along with the information."

Snowden instead urged the "adversarial press" to challenge government and ignite public debate "without putting [national security](#) at risk."

He argued that the dangers critics have played up regarding disclosure of information have not materialized, and insisted that he remains comfortable with his decisions.

He depicted the NSA's Prism program for getting user information from Internet firms as a way for the US government to "deputize corporate America to do its dirty work."

And he blasted a US secret court for seldom rejecting National Security Agency requests to compel Internet titans to turn over user data and US legislators for showing little oversight.

Snowden urged Internet companies to stand against online snooping by encrypting online activity by default so spies could easily note anything from book browsing at Amazon.com to visiting websites.

People should be able to book air travel, order books, make phone calls and send text messages without worrying about how it will look to an agent of the government, Snowden declared.

"More communications are being intercepted in America about Americans that there are in Russia about Russians," Snowden said.

Terrorism mantra

He argued that the NSA was making the US, and the world, less safe by

lobbying for weak standards that could open back doors into online venues or services such as online commerce or banking.

"Our basic freedoms are not a partisan issue," Snowden said. "It is up to us to protect them; it is up to us to preserve the open Internet."

Snowden endorsed the campaign by Berners-Lee for a global Magna Carta laying out values and rights on the Internet.

"A Magna Carta for the Internet is exactly what we need," Snowden said.

Anderson said that the NSA had been invited to take part in the TED chat with Snowden, but it did not work out "for logistical reasons."

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