

Tech firms mark Snowden leaks with new campaign

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A coalition of companies and digital activist groups unveiled new steps in their "Reset the Net" campaign—stepping up encryption to keep online activity free from [government surveillance](#).

The moves came one year after the first reports published from secret documents leaked by Snowden describing the vast electronic surveillance programs of the US National Security Agency and other intelligence services —revelations which roiled US relations with allies and others and rocked the technology community.

In their latest response, the companies in the "Fight for the Future" coalition were unveiling tougher security standards or promoting new privacy safeguards.

"It's been one year since Edward Snowden blew the whistle on the US government's abusive spying programs. In that time Congress and the Obama Administration have failed to protect our rights," said Tiffiniy Cheng, spokeswoman for the coalition.

"Now, they've got a rebellion on their hands as tech companies and [internet users](#) work together to directly intervene in mass surveillance and block the NSA and its kind from the Web."

This week, Google announced plans to make it tougher for spies or anyone else to snoop on email, unveiling Chrome browser software for scrambling digital messages.

Other firms—including WordPress and Tumblr—said they were also stepping up encryption on the sites they power.

The anniversary also was marked by a renewed push for legislation to curb the surveillance powers of the NSA.

"We understand that governments have a duty to protect their citizens. But the balance in many countries has tipped too far in favor of the state and away from the rights of the individual," said a letter to lawmakers from the "Reform Government Surveillance" group which includes Microsoft, Facebook, Google and AOL.

"This undermines the freedoms we all cherish, and it must change."

Meanwhile the Electronic Frontier Foundation, The Tor Project, the Free Software Foundation and the Freedom of the Press Foundation announced a joint campaign to encourage Internet users to support the Tor network—an online system which uses encryption to thwart surveillance.

"Tor is strong code. It's one of the few technologies reported to thwart the National Security Agency's passive [surveillance](#) practices," said Rainey Reitman of EFF.

"But Tor can only exist because of an international network of volunteers running relays."

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