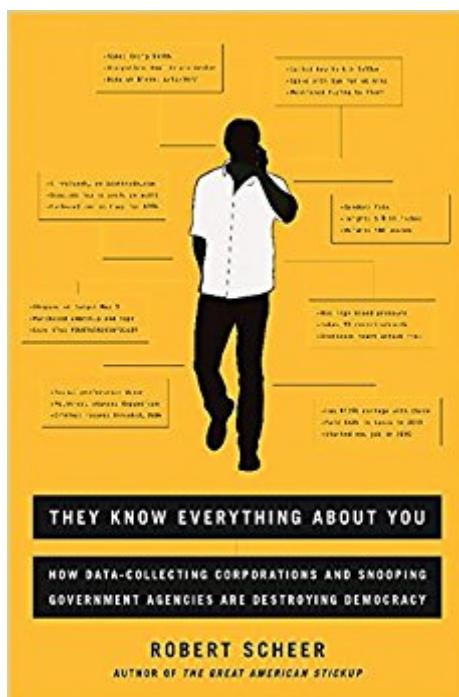


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They Know Everything About You: How Data-Collecting Corporations And Snooping Government Agencies Are Destroying Democracy



Synopsis

In the first week of June 2013, the American people discovered that for a decade, they had abjectly traded their individual privacy for the chimera of national security. The revelation that the federal government has full access to all phone records and the vast trove of presumably private personal data posted on the Internet has brought the threat of a surveillance society to the fore. But the erosion of privacy rights extends far beyond big government. Big business has long played a leading role in the hollowing out of personal freedoms. In this new book, Robert Scheer shows how our most intimate habits, from private correspondence, book pages read, and lists of friends and phone conversations have been seamlessly combined in order to create a detailed map of an individual's social and biological DNA. From wiretapping to lax social media security, from domestic spy drones to sophisticated biometrics, both the United States government and private corporate interests have dangerously undermined the delicate balance between national security and individual sovereignty. Without privacy, Scheer argues, there is neither freedom nor democracy. The freedom to be left alone embodies the most basic of human rights. Yet this freedom has been squandered in the name of national security and consumer convenience. The information revolution has exposed much of the world's population to a boundless world of universally shared information. But it has also stripped both passive and active participants of their every shred of privacy in ways most don't comprehend. No authoritarian regime ever could have hoped to gain the power to control the power and aspirations of their subjects that today's off-the-shelf information technology already provides. The technology of surveillance, Scheer warns, represents an existential threat to the liberation of the human spirit.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Nation Books; Reprint edition (February 23, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1568585187

ISBN-13: 978-1568585185

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 23 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #221,789 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Privacy & Surveillance #421 in Books > Politics & Social

Customer Reviews

"Scheer acquits himself as a passionate advocate for privacy rights; you'd want him by your side at a protest." *Los Angeles Times* "...Scheer powerfully connects the dots of our chilling Orwellian present, one in which privacy is considered a luxury, rather than a right."

Publishers Weekly "A vital piece of work that demands attention." *Kirkus Reviews* Robert Scheer reminds us that privacy is everything; the protector of our liberty, the guarantor of our personal autonomy, the fountainhead of our democracy; and yet it's disappearing faster than an electronic blip moving at warp speed from your computer to the NSA. With clarity and precision, Scheer dissects the military-intelligence complex, showing it to be neither very secure nor very intelligent, but, rather, dangerous to us all. — Robert B. Reich, Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy, University of California at Berkeley

They Know Everything About You is a brilliant book. Robert Scheer, who covered my 1971 trial after I released the Pentagon Papers, has been following privacy and surveillance issues for decades. He is a key voice and his book; cogent, timely, and fascinating; is an indispensable text for our time. — Daniel Ellsberg, author of *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* -- This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Robert Scheer is the editor-in-chief of the Webby Award-winning online magazine *Truthdig*, professor at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, and co-host of *Left, Right & Center*, a weekly syndicated radio show broadcast from NPR's west coast affiliate, KCRW. In the 1960s, he was editor of the groundbreaking *Ramparts* magazine and later was national correspondent and columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*. Scheer is the author of nine books, including *The Great American Stickup*. He lives in Los Angeles.

After reading Scheer's book I now believe the title "They Know Everything About You." Profiteering tech giants are mining personal information at an alarming rate that has too easily fallen into the hands of the NSA, the spy agency that was outed by Edward Snowden. It is a terrifying read about our loss of privacy that has come invisibly, as Scheer warns, with potentially devastating results. Scheer's book is essential reading for educators who seem oblivious to the threat of a surveillance state while they promote expanded access to the Internet.

Robert Scheer is one of America's most respected truth tellers. "They Know Everything About You" is a frightening exposé of just how covert and labyrinthine the "military-intelligence complex" has become, thanks in no small way to the "whistleblower" revelations of Edward Snowden about the extent of spying on American citizens by the National Security Agency in collusion with mega data mining companies like Google and Facebook. Scheer makes a strong case that since 9/11 and with the implementation of the USA Patriot Act our Constitutional rights against "unreasonable searches and seizures" protected under the 4th Amendment have been violated and abrogated relentlessly by our government under the guise of the War on Terror, along with the willing assistance of their accomplices Facebook and Google providing all the necessary surveillance software and social media platforms to collect all our personal information as seamlessly and benignly as possible. It's an incestuous relationship of a most deceitful and diabolical kind that threatens our very liberty and democracy. Will Americans display the necessary courage and fortitude to rise up and reverse this slide down the slippery slope towards totalitarianism? Scheer desperately hopes so, but unfortunately social media and the Internet have been powerful catalysts behind America morphing into a nation of celebrity worshipers, gossip mongers and techno zombies so enamored with the trivial pursuit we've come to believe our own BS as gospel. Are we just distracted sheeple or activist citizens? Scheer's insightful "wake up" call with "They Know Everything About You" will shake anyone out of their American Dream stupor and open their eyes to a shocking and disturbing trend in our country. An excellent read, but a very scary one.

Great book, a must-read if you want to be able to have an intelligent conversation about government surveillance, corporate complicity, and what is happening to your privacy and that of everyone in the country. This is an informative and downright scary book, written with authority and clarity in a breezy style that makes it a quick read. This is worth passing around to friends who think there is nothing wrong with the government spying on the governed if they are doing nothing wrong. Read this and they will learn that the obligation of citizenship in a free society is to call out the government when it is wrong rather than in engaging in fearful self-censorship. That is the essence of living in a democracy.

If this book doesn't clarify for you the basic facts about US government and business dragnet surveillance of all US citizens, and why that Un-American invasion of privacy deserves your continued attention, you don't have a pulse. As its author, veteran US journalist Robert Scheer says

in this book at one point, "The dirty secret of internet business is that it is privacy and not just advertising that is being sold." Scheer then goes on to describe in unnerving but riveting detail how US government draconian and virtually complete surveillance of Americans far exceeds the awful betrayal of customer privacy by internet-based businesses. This book provides a range of vivid examples of why former US intelligence employee Edward Snowden is a whistle-blower. It dissects many US government "explanations" for these surveillance programs, revealing these excuses as not just hollow but deliberately deceptive. If you didn't know, for example, that the Bush administration's "Total Information Awareness" program has been fully authorized in a slightly disguised form several years ago, Scheer walks you through that transformation step by step. I especially appreciate Mr. Scheer's analysis of what these business and government dragnet spying programs are doing to US journalists, and how journalists have been taking steps to regain their privacy. If journalists can do that, so can the rest of us.

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