

## Legal Regulation & Education: Doing the Right Thing?

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### Orwell +30: 2014 as Orwell's 1984

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

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Inside the flat a teenage voice was shouting and screaming about the 720 he had just pulled on his skateboard. The voice came from Winston's iMac where his teenage daughter was watching YouTube. Winston tried to tune out the voice, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely, his daughter would never allow it! Similarly although he tried to ignore the bright colours of Club Penguin being displayed on his iPad by his six year old son or the beeping from his pocket where his iPhone told him he had just been tagged in a Facebook update there was no way to turn them any of them off or to escape their demands and gaze: life he mused was today online as much as offline. He moved over to the window: a large, overweight figure, the fullness of his body merely emphasized by the Armani suit, which was the uniform of the PR executive. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine, his skin roughened by designer stubble and the cold of the winter that had just ended.

Outside, even through the shut windowpane, the world looked busy. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and discarded Metros into spirals, and though the sun was dim and the sky overcast, there seemed to be colour in anything especially the digital advertising screens that were plastered everywhere. From almost everywhere you looked you saw adverts from Smart TVs, Smart Phones, Smart watches and Smart underpants (that seemed to be what David Beckham was suggesting). There on the screen opposite was the advert for that day's Guardian newspaper "GCHQ and NSA targeted charities, Germans, Israeli PM and EU chief", the caption said, while the sad eyes of Edward Snowden looked deep into Winston's own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word Tempora. In the far distance a Met Police drone skimmed down between the roofs, overhead for an instant like a blue-bottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the Police Patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the GCHQ-NSA mattered.

Behind Winston's back the voice from the iMac was now babbling away about sneezing cats and the much mirth could be heard from both his children who were now gathered around the one screen, the iPad discarded but location services still enabled. The iMac, like all modern digital devices had capacity to receive and transmit simultaneously. Winston often imagined that any sound he made or any search term he entered would be picked up by it. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being

watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, GCHQ were plugged in on any individual system was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your network whenever they wanted to. You have to live - did live, from habit that became instinct - in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized...