

How the NSA Can Greatly Reduce Mass School Shootings

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Instead of spying on Americans to [crush dissent](#), [consolidate power](#), or gather sensitive information for [blackmail](#), the NSA could actually do something useful.

The NSA could reduce the number of mass shootings using existing technology and resources.

Remember, virtually all school shooters are males in their teens or early twenties.

And the New York Times [reports](#) that most school shooters leave *numerous* public clues about their intentions *before* the shooting ... and most are obsessed with reading about prior school shootings:

Studies have shown, for example, that in school shootings, the killers virtually always “leak” their intentions, leaving a trail of clues behind them. Nikolas Cruz, the 19-year-old who the police said has confessed in the Parkland shooting, apparently was no exception: Students reportedly avoided him and joked that if anyone were going to shoot up the school, it would be him.

Researchers have also found that in many, if not most, cases of school violence, the perpetrator has done extensive research on previous school shootings, studying them in detail, often with special attention to the killings at Columbine High School in 1999. A [study of nine school shootings in Europe](#) conducted by J. Reid Meloy, a forensic psychologist in San Diego who consults on threat assessment for schools and corporations, found that a third of the killers had “consciously imitated and emulated what had happened in Columbine.”

Elizabeth Englander, Professor of Psychology, and the Director of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC), Bridgewater State University, [writes](#):

Technology may challenge kids’ social development, but it can also be harnessed for good. Anonymous reporting systems – perhaps text-message based – can make it easier for parents and students to alert law enforcement and school counselors to kids who seem disconnected or disturbed. That enables early intervention.

In Steamboat Springs, Colorado, [one such tip](#) appeared to prevent extreme violence in May 2017. Police took a young man who’d threatened to harm his peers into protective custody before he could act on his words.

Extreme violence is almost always preceded by certain behavioral problems. These typically include a [propensity toward aggression](#), a marked [lack of social connectedness](#), indications of [serious mental illness](#) and a [fascination with violence and guns](#).

Most young people today use social media to express their feelings and aspirations. In the case of school shooters, [these posts are often violent](#). A single violent post is hardly a guarantee of homicidal acts, of course. But evidence strongly indicates that [repeated expressions of this nature can be a sign of trouble](#).

But the current approach of law enforcement is just to [wait and hope for a luck break](#):

We are not proactively scraping the Internet for offenders ... We react.” Instead, the agents depend on what [the head of the FBI’s the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, America’s top expert on identifying mass shooters] calls “the human bystander.” They depend on somebody giving someone else the creeps. Though he acknowledges that many bystanders are fragile resources—“it’s usually the people closest to an individual who are best positioned to observe those kinds of concerning behaviors and at the same time the most reluctant to report”—his team members have no choice but to wait for a concerned person to tell them about a person of concern.

But we *don’t* have to wait for a lucky break of a volunteer bystander getting the creeps ... the NSA can do it for us.

After all, the NSA is already spying on virtually [everyone in America](#).

The high-level NSA executive who *created* the NSA’s global electronic surveillance system, Bill Binney, says that the NSA could help identify would-be shooters ... while protecting the privacy of most Americans.

Specifically, the system which Binney designed at the NSA to catch terrorists [automatically encrypted and anonymized](#) Americans’ information. The information could only be decrypted with a court order.

Binney thinks this could work for school shooters ...

Specifically, the NSA could gather information from the web, social media, and other sources and gather information on:

- Males in their teens or early twenties
- Who lack social connectedness
- Who have obsessively studied past school shootings ... or otherwise made violent statements on social media or the web
- Who have experienced mental health issues
- Who law enforcement personnel or others say are unstable

The identity of people who turn up using these parameters would be kept encrypted and anonymous ... unless and until a judge ordered them to be decrypted in order to further investigate and question the individual.

Then the suspect could be imprisoned, counseled or left alone ... as appropriate.

How about the NSA do something – for a change – which actually *helps* the American people?

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