



First POST: The Senator Protests

BY [Micah L. Sifry](#) | Wednesday, March 12 2014

The Senator Protests

- Taking the simmering fight between the CIA and the Senate Intelligence Committee to a whole new level, yesterday Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) [publicly accused the agency](#) of violating federal law and undermining Congress' ability to oversee its actions. At issue: the agency's interference with the committee's investigators, who have been reviewing its detention and torture programs, and which appears to have included snooping on the computers being used by Senate staffers in their investigation.
- Feinstein used her floor speech ([full text here](#)) to reveal for the first time that in 2010 the CIA had also removed documents from the computer system being used by her staff. It's worth recalling that one of the triggers behind this whole fight is the CIA's deliberate destruction of evidence describing the detention centers and interrogation program it ran.
- Mother Jones' Washington correspondent David Corn [explains](#) why Feinstein's allegations threaten to blow up "the foundation of the national security state."
- CIA Director John Brennan [denied](#) that the agency had violated the Intelligence Committee's computers, in a public talk at the Council on Foreign Relations.
- NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden [made a big splash](#) with his live-from-Russia appearance at SXSW on Monday, charging the agency with "setting fire to the future of the Internet" and telling the 3000+ people in the room "You guys are all the firefighters, and we need you to help fight this."
- Snowden [also told NBC News](#) that Feinstein's responses is "another 'Merkel Effect,' where an elected official does not care at all that the rights of millions of ordinary citizens are violated by our spies, but suddenly it's a scandal when a politician finds out the same thing happens to them."
- President Obama appeared on Zach Galifianakis's "[Between Two Ferns](#)" comedy interview show on Funny or Die, in search of young uninsured Americans who still haven't signed up on HealthCare.gov.
- 270 Strategies, the online politics consultancy led by Obama 2012's Mitch Stewart and Jeremy Bird, proudly unveiled [Ready for Hillary's new website](#), which they said is

"focused on organizing." The group says it has more than 2 million supporters already signed up (its [Facebook page](#) has 1.75 million likes).

- Jay Rosen channels Felix Salmon to [explain](#) why Newsweek's recent shaky cover story supposedly unmasking the inventor of Bitcoin was so old-school.
- Jim Harper of the Cato Institute is [joining](#) the Bitcoin Foundation to be its global policy counsel.
- In Time Magazine, Tony Halle of Chartbeat [busts four key myths](#) about where people place their attention online. Two key points he makes: social shares don't tell you anything about what people actually spend time reading; and native advertising is disliked almost as much as obvious advertising.
- Some political scientists teamed up with Credo Mobile to do a controlled, real-life experiment on how much access political donors get to Members of Congress, and the answer may astonish and anger you, [reports](#) Matea Gold in the Washington Post.
- The AP [reports](#) on the political power of "Black Twitter."
- In case you missed it, this [New York Times op-ed](#) by Nickolay Kononov on the takeover of the Russian social media site VKontakte (the equivalent of Facebook) by Putin loyalists is fascinating and troubling.
- How to [understand the difference](#) between making your data open and making it available.
- Noah Smith channels Daniel Suarez, [arguing in Quartz](#) that autonomous killer drones "will cause an upheaval in society like we haven't seen in 700 years."
- And on that happy note, just a reminder that First POST is on semi-hiatus this week as I transit from Austin, Texas and SXSW and head to Warsaw, Poland for PDF Poland CEE.