

The Honorable James L. Robart

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT SEATTLE

MICROSOFT CORPORATION,  
Plaintiff,  
v.  
THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE, and LORETTA LYNCH, in  
her official capacity as Attorney General of  
the United States,  
Defendants.

Case No. 2:16-cv-00538-JLR

**MOTION TO FILE BRIEF OF AMICI  
CURIAE ELECTRONIC FRONTIER  
FOUNDATION, ACCESS NOW, NEW  
AMERICA’S OPEN TECHNOLOGY  
INSTITUTE, AND JENNIFER GRANICK  
IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFF’S  
OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT’S  
MOTION TO DISMISS**

Noted on Motion Calendar:  
September 23, 2016

TO: ALL PARTIES HEREIN AND THEIR COUNSEL OF RECORD

AND TO: CLERK OF THE ABOVE-ENTITLED COURT

*Amici curiae* Electronic Frontier Foundation, Access Now, New America’s Open  
Technology Institute, and Jennifer Granick submit this request for leave to file the attached  
*amicus* brief pursuant to this Court’s order on August 23, 2016 [Dkt. 42] in support of Plaintiff  
Microsoft Corporation’s Opposition to Government’s Motion to Dismiss [Dkt. 38].<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Amici* also requested and received consent to file from the government defendants.

1 **I. STATEMENT OF INTEREST**

2 *Amici* are non-profit organizations and a legal scholar who operate at the intersection of  
3 civil liberties and technology. We plainly have a different perspective and interest in this case than  
4 both Microsoft and the government. Representing the interests of technology users in the courts  
5 and through legislative and policy advocacy, our priority is to ensure that constitutional rights keep  
6 pace with innovation. We are particularly concerned when the interplay between law and  
7 technology prevents individuals from defending their constitutional rights. At issue in this case is  
8 the use by millions of people of “cloud” services to store highly personal and confidential  
9 information, and the applicability of a law—the Stored Communications Act (SCA), part of the  
10 Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA)—that governs government access to such  
11 information, but makes it nearly impossible for the owners of that information to challenge  
12 government searches and seizures under the Fourth Amendment.

13 The **Electronic Frontier Foundation** (“EFF”) is a San Francisco-based, non-profit,  
14 member-supported digital rights organization. Focusing on the intersection of civil liberties and  
15 technology, EFF actively encourages and challenges industry, government, and the courts to  
16 support free expression, privacy, and openness in the information society. Founded in 1990, EFF  
17 has over 25,000 dues-paying members.

18 **Access Now** is a non-governmental organization that defends and extends the digital rights  
19 of users at risk around the world, combining innovative policy, global advocacy, and direct  
20 technical support to fight for open and secure communications for all. Access Now provides  
21 thought leadership and policy recommendations to the public and private sectors to ensure the  
22 Internet’s continued openness and universality, and wields an action-focused global community of  
23 nearly half a million users from more than 185 countries. Access Now advocates globally for  
24 increased transparency around government surveillance and maintains the Transparency Reporting  
25 Index—a record of transparency reports from today’s leading Internet companies and telcos.

26 **New America’s Open Technology Institute** (“OTT”) is New America’s program  
27 dedicated to ensuring that all communities have equitable access to digital technology and its

1 benefits, promoting universal access to communications technologies that are both open and  
2 secure. New America is a Washington, DC-based think tank and civic enterprise committed  
3 to renewing American politics, prosperity, and purpose in the Digital Age through big ideas,  
4 bridging the gap between technology and policy, and curating broad public conversation.  
5 New America's OTI has a special interest in ensuring that Internet companies are able to be  
6 transparent with their customers about the extent of government demands for user data,  
7 as evidenced by research and advocacy work such as its extensive Transparency Reporting Toolkit  
8 project to standardize and promote internet transparency reporting, and its work to ensure that the  
9 USA FREEDOM Act of 2015 affirmed companies' legal right to report on national security  
10 demands.

11 **Jennifer Granick** is the Director of Civil Liberties at the Stanford Center for Internet and  
12 Society. Jennifer practices, speaks and writes about computer crime and security, electronic  
13 surveillance, consumer privacy, data protection, copyright, trademark and the Digital Millennium  
14 Copyright Act. She was selected by Information Security magazine in 2003 as one of 20 "Women  
15 of Vision" in the computer security field. She earned her law degree from University of California,  
16 Hastings College of the Law and her undergraduate degree from the New College of the University  
17 of South Florida.

## 18 **II. AMICI'S BRIEF OFFERS UNIQUE AND HELPFUL INFORMATION**

19 *Amici's* brief would provide the Court with unique and helpful information regarding the  
20 constitutionality of the SCA under the Fourth Amendment.

21 Our brief includes an historical overview of how the content of communications has been  
22 protected by the Fourth Amendment. We show that various courts have found that individuals  
23 have a reasonable expectation of privacy in their communications even when those  
24 communications have been facilitated by a third party. Thus we show that the "third-party  
25 doctrine" is inapplicable to personal and confidential content stored in the "cloud" by service  
26 providers such as Microsoft.

1 We also discuss precedent holding that government notice is a component of  
2 “reasonableness” under the Fourth Amendment. Thus the government is required to notify the  
3 parties to communications and other content creators when the government seeks to access that  
4 content—regardless of whether the access is by technological means or is justifiably conducted  
5 in secret for a limited time, or the legal process is served on a third party such as Microsoft.

6 We argue that government notice to the targets of an investigation is important when the  
7 government seeks to access “cloud” content because notice is not only a constitutional obligation  
8 on the government, it is often the only means by which accountholders may be able to vindicate  
9 their right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures under the Fourth Amendment.

10 **III. CONCLUSION**

11 *Amici* respectfully request that the Court grant leave to file the attached *amicus* brief in  
12 support of Microsoft.

13 Dated this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September, 2016.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Technology Institute, and Jennifer Granick*

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on September 2, 2016, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the Court using the CM/ECF system, which will send notification of such filing to those attorneys of record registered on the CM/ECF system.

DATED this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September, 2016.

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The Honorable James L. Robart

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
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OF JUSTICE, and LORETTA LYNCH, in  
her official capacity as Attorney General of  
the United States,  
Defendants.

Case No. 2:16-cv-00538-JLR

**[PROPOSED] ORDER GRANTING  
MOTION TO FILE BRIEF OF AMICI  
CURIAE ELECTRONIC FRONTIER  
FOUNDATION, ACCESS NOW, NEW  
AMERICA’S OPEN TECHNOLOGY  
INSTITUTE, AND JENNIFER GRANICK  
IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFF’S  
OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT’S  
MOTION TO DISMISS**

Noted on Motion Calendar:  
September 23, 2016

**ORDER**

Having considered the unopposed Motion to File Brief of *Amici Curiae* Electronic Frontier Foundation, Access Now, New America’s Open Technology Institute, and Jennifer Granick in support of Plaintiff’s Opposition to Government’s Motion to Dismiss,  
IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Motion to File Brief of *Amici Curiae* is GRANTED and the proposed brief submitted with the application is deemed filed.

DATED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
JAMES L. ROPART  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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*and Jennifer Granick*  
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The Honorable James L. Robart

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Case No. 2:16-cv-00538-JLR

**BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE ELECTRONIC  
FRONTIER FOUNDATION, ACCESS  
NOW, NEW AMERICA’S OPEN  
TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE, AND  
JENNIFER GRANICK IN SUPPORT OF  
PLAINTIFF’S OPPOSITION TO  
GOVERNMENT’S MOTION TO DISMISS**

*Amici curiae* Electronic Frontier Foundation, Access Now, New America’s Open  
Technology Institute, and Jennifer Granick submit this *amicus* brief in support of Plaintiff  
Microsoft Corporation’s Opposition to Government’s Motion to Dismiss [Dkt. 38]. We have  
separately requested leave to file this *amicus* brief pursuant to this Court’s order on August 23,  
2016 [Dkt. 42].

1     **DISCLOSURE OF CORPORATE AFFILIATIONS AND OTHER ENTITIES WITH A**  
2     **DIRECT FINANCIAL INTEREST IN LITIGATION**

3             Pursuant to Rule 26.1 of the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure, *amici curiae*  
4 Electronic Frontier Foundation, Access Now, and New America’s Open Technology Institute  
5 state that they do not have a parent corporation, and that no publicly held corporation owns 10%  
6 or more of the stock of *amici*.

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1 **INTEREST OF AMICI<sup>1</sup>**

2 *Amici* are non-profit organizations and a legal scholar that operate at the intersection of  
3 civil liberties and technology. Representing the interests of technology users in the courts and  
4 through legislative and policy advocacy, our priority is to ensure that constitutional rights keep  
5 pace with innovation. We are particularly concerned when the interplay between law and  
6 technology prevents individuals from defending their constitutional rights. At issue in this case is  
7 the use by millions of people of “cloud” services to store highly personal and confidential  
8 information, and the applicability of a law—the Stored Communications Act (SCA), part of the  
9 Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA)—that governs government access to such  
10 information, but makes it nearly impossible for the creators of that information to challenge  
11 government searches and seizures under the Fourth Amendment.

12 **INTRODUCTION**

13 Fundamental to protection of the Fourth Amendment is the rule that the government must  
14 notify those whose privacy it invades, ensuring that it provides aggrieved persons with the  
15 knowledge needed to contest the lawfulness of government searches and seizures. While  
16 government notice has been a regular and constitutionally required feature of search and seizure  
17 warrants since the nation’s founding, notice is especially important today for a simple reason:  
18 with the rise of the Internet and cloud services, private communications and information are  
19 stored in places where the parties to those communications and the owners or creators of that  
20 information cannot independently know whether the government has violated their Fourth  
21 Amendment rights. Dkt. # 28, Microsoft First Amended Complaint ¶ 3 (“FAC”).

22 *Amici* support Microsoft’s argument that 18 U.S.C. § 2703 “is facially unconstitutional to  
23 the extent it absolves the government of the obligation to give notice to a customer whose  
24 content it obtains by warrant, without regard to the circumstances of the particular case.” FAC ¶

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<sup>1</sup> No party or party’s counsel participated in the writing of the brief in whole or in part. No party,  
27 party’s counsel or other person contributed money to fund the preparation or submission of the  
brief.

1 35. Section 2703 governs government access to information stored in the cloud, yet it expressly  
2 authorizes no-notice warrants. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2703(b)(1)(A) (“without required notice to the  
3 subscriber or customer, if the governmental entity obtains a warrant”).

4 *Amici* argue that the Fourth Amendment’s protection against unreasonable searches and  
5 seizures by the government broadly applies to digital information, including that stored in the  
6 cloud by third-party providers for the benefit of their customers. We also argue that the failure of  
7 the SCA to require government notice to targets of warrants for digital search and seizure  
8 violates the Fourth Amendment’s reasonableness requirement.<sup>2</sup> That the government can obtain  
9 information from Microsoft or other cloud providers without disturbing the targets of  
10 investigations is a mere happenstance of modern technology and social practices that cannot  
11 affect the notice requirement.

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25 <sup>2</sup> *Amici* believe that searches and seizures of communications content and records under  
26 subpoenas or court orders not based on probable cause are also subject to the notice requirement.  
27 *See, e.g., City of Los Angeles v. Patel*, 135 S. Ct. 2443, 2453 (2015) (subpoena recipient’s  
opportunity to “move to quash the subpoena before any search takes place” protects his or her  
Fourth Amendment rights, thus implying required government notice). But *amici* limit their  
argument here to the warranted searches and seizures challenged by Microsoft.

**ARGUMENT****I. THE FOURTH AMENDMENT PROTECTS DIGITAL CONTENT**

The content of communications are protected by the Fourth Amendment. This is true even when content is held by a third party, thus making the “third-party doctrine”<sup>3</sup> immaterial in this case. Almost 140 years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that the Fourth Amendment protected the content of letters sent in the postal mail from warrantless government search while in transit. *Ex Parte Jackson*, 96 U.S. 727, 733 (1877); *People v. Superior Court of Butte County*, 275 Cal. App. 2d 489, 496 (1969) (“first class mail is sacrosanct”); *United States v. Jacobsen*, 466 U.S. 109, 114 (1984) (“Letters and other sealed packages are in the general class of effects in which the public at large has a legitimate expectation of privacy; warrantless searches of such effects are presumptively unreasonable.”). Nearly a century later, the Court ruled that a person making a phone call on a public pay phone was entitled to expect the conversation would remain private. *Katz v. United States*, 389 U.S. 347 (1967). *See also Berger v. State of New York*, 388 U.S. 41 (1967).

In *Katz*, the Supreme Court articulated two core principles of Fourth Amendment jurisprudence. First, “the Fourth Amendment protects people, not places.” *Katz*, 389 U.S. at 351. Second, the Fourth Amendment must be interpreted expansively to protect the privacy of communications. Although *Olmstead v. United States*, 277 U.S. 438 (1928), had held that wiretaps are not governed by the Fourth Amendment because they involve no “trespass” upon property, the Supreme Court overruled *Olmstead* largely because “[t]o read the Constitution more narrowly is to ignore the vital role that the public telephone has come to play in private communication.” *Katz*, 389 U.S. at 352.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *See generally Smith v. Maryland*, 442 U.S. 735 (1979).

<sup>4</sup> In *United States v. Jones*, 132 S. Ct. 945 (2012), the Court explained that government conduct can constitute a Fourth Amendment search either when it infringes on a reasonable expectation of privacy or when it involves a physical intrusion (a trespass) on a constitutionally protected space or thing for the purpose of obtaining information. The Court stated, “Fourth Amendment rights do not rise or fall with the *Katz* formulation ... for most of our history the Fourth Amendment was understood to embody a particular concern for government trespass upon the

1 Today, the Internet and its ability to host “cloud” content plays a “vital role” in private  
2 communication. Federal courts across the country have applied the principles of *Katz* and  
3 reached the same result when considering digital content, finding that individuals can expect  
4 their emails and private social media conversations to remain private. *United States v. Warshak*,  
5 631 F.3d 266 (6th Cir. 2010) (reasonable expectation of privacy in emails); *R.S. ex rel. S.S. v.*  
6 *Minnewaska Area Sch. Dist. No. 2149*, 894 F.Supp.2d 1128, 1132 (D. Minn. 2012) (reasonable  
7 expectation of privacy in private Facebook messages); *United States v. Ali*, 870 F.Supp.2d 10, 39  
8 n. 39 (D. D.C. 2012) (reasonable expectation of privacy in emails). In *Warshak*, the Sixth Circuit  
9 held that there exists a reasonable expectation of privacy in the content of emails stored in the  
10 cloud by a commercial third-party service provider, and thus the Fourth Amendment requires  
11 that the government obtain a warrant based on probable cause before accessing such emails.  
12 *Warshak*, 631 F.3d at 288. The court further held Section 2703 unconstitutional to the extent it  
13 permits the government to obtain the content of communications without a warrant if those  
14 communications are older than 180 days. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 2703(a).<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the Ninth  
15 Circuit recently held that “[p]ersonal email can, and often does, contain all the information once  
16 found in the ‘papers and effects’ mentioned explicitly in the Fourth Amendment,” and therefore  
17 the account holder “has a strong claim to a legitimate expectation of privacy in his personal  
18 email, given the private information it likely contains.” *In re Grand Jury Subpoena, JK-15-029 v.*  
19 *Kitzhaber*, 2016 WL 3745541, at \*5 (9th Cir. 2016). *See also United States v. Forrester*, 512

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22 areas (‘persons, houses, papers, and effects’) it enumerates. *Katz* did not repudiate that  
23 understanding.” *Id.* at 950. Thus government searches of emails and other communications may  
24 also qualify as the type of “trespass” that the framers sought to prevent when they adopted the  
25 Fourth Amendment.

26 <sup>5</sup> *Amici* contend that government surveillance authorized by the SCA is both a search and a  
27 seizure of communications. *See United States v. Comprehensive Drug Testing, Inc.*, 621 F.3d  
1162, 1171-72, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010) (*en banc*) (*per curiam*) (describing the government’s  
copying of electronic data as a seizure); *Katz*, 389 U.S. at 354 (describing the government’s  
recording of a phone call as a “search and seizure”).

1 F.3d 500, 511 (9th Cir. 2008) (emails contain “content that the sender presumes will be read only  
2 by the intended recipient”).

3 Indeed, the government agrees that a reasonable expectation of privacy attaches to cloud  
4 content, thus a warrant is required. In May 2013, then-Attorney General Eric Holder testified that  
5 “having a warrant to obtain the content of communication from a service provider is something  
6 that we support.” *Oversight of the United States Department of Justice, Hearing Before the*  
7 *House Committee on the Judiciary*, Serial No. 113–43, at 87 (May 15, 2013).<sup>6</sup>

## 8 **II. THE NOTICE REQUIREMENT APPLIES TO DIGITAL SEARCHES AND** 9 **SEIZURES**

10 When the Fourth Amendment was adopted, government threats to privacy and property  
11 were generally physical. And it was almost inherent in such searches and seizures that the target  
12 would know that the sanctity of her private life had been invaded. Yet the government can now  
13 intrude on a person’s privacy or property whether or not the person knows of the intrusion. As  
14 Justice Brandeis warned, “Subtler and more far-reaching means of invading privacy have  
15 become available to the Government. . . . Ways may some day be developed by which the  
16 Government, without removing papers from secret drawers, can reproduce them in court, and by  
17 which it will be enabled to expose to a jury the most intimate occurrences of the home.”  
18 *Olmstead*, 277 U.S. at 473-74 (Brandeis, J., dissenting).

19 With the pervasiveness of cloud computing, “some day” is here. And today, as always,  
20 the notice requirement must reach as far as the Fourth Amendment itself does.

21 In *Wilson v. Arkansas*, 514 U.S. 927 (1995), the Supreme Court made clear that  
22 governmental provision of notice to targets of physical search or seizure “forms a part of the  
23 reasonableness inquiry under the Fourth Amendment.” *Id.* at 929. Prior or contemporaneous  
24 notice need not always be given, but it is the default rule. *See Richards v. Wisconsin*, 520 U.S.  
25 385, 387 (1997) (“the Fourth Amendment incorporates the common law requirement that police  
26 officers entering a dwelling must knock on the door and announce their identity and purpose

27 <sup>6</sup> <https://judiciary.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/113-43-80973-1.pdf>.

1 before attempting forcible entry”); *Hudson v. Michigan*, 547 U.S. 586, 589 (2006) (“The  
2 common-law principle that law enforcement officers must announce their presence and provide  
3 residents an opportunity to open the door is an ancient one.”); *United States v. Freitas*, 800 F.2d  
4 1451, 1456 (9th Cir. 1986) (finding sneak-and-peek warrant “constitutionally defective in failing  
5 to provide explicitly for notice within a reasonable, but short, time subsequent to the surreptitious  
6 entry”).

7 Because the notice requirement is a component of the reasonableness analysis, not of the  
8 Warrant Clause, it applies to the entire range of Fourth Amendment activities, including  
9 electronic searches conducted outside the home. For electronic eavesdropping, where “success  
10 depends on secrecy,” the Supreme Court condemned a statute used to authorize surveillance of a  
11 business office for having “no requirement for notice as do conventional warrants, nor does it  
12 overcome this defect by requiring some showing of special facts.” *Berger*, 388 U.S. at 60.  
13 Indeed, the *Berger* Court declared, “Such a showing of exigency, in order to avoid notice, would  
14 appear more important in eavesdropping, with its inherent dangers, than that required when  
15 conventional procedures of search and seizure are utilized.” *Id.* Government notice to the  
16 surveillance target therefore cannot be dismissed as a mere fortuity of physical searches or  
17 seizures that occur within the person’s sphere of awareness. Instead, to the extent that electronic  
18 surveillance was effectively invisible, and that prior notice could not be given, the Fourth  
19 Amendment requires government notice once any exigency justifying delay had lapsed. *Katz*,  
20 389 U.S. at 355, n.16.

21 The federal Wiretap Act, largely inspired by *Berger*, unsurprisingly requires post-  
22 surveillance government notice to targets of interception orders. 18 U.S.C. § 2518(8)(d). *See also*  
23 *Dalia v. United States*, 441 U.S. 238, 248 (1979) (permitting covert entry into a business office  
24 in order to plant listening device, but noting “that Title III provided a constitutionally adequate  
25 substitute for advance notice by requiring that, once the surveillance operation is completed, the  
26 authorizing judge must cause notice to be served on those subjected to surveillance”); *United*  
27 *States v. Donovan*, 429 U.S. 413, 430 (1977) (“The *Berger* and *Katz* decisions established that

1 notice of surveillance is a constitutional requirement of any surveillance statute.”) (quoting  
2 legislative history of Title III).

3 *Berger* and *Dalia* prove that the notice requirement is not limited to physical search and  
4 seizure cases of homes and businesses. The familiar “knock-and-announce” requirement is  
5 merely a species of the more general notice requirement. The government has a default duty to  
6 notify the persons whose privacy it invades, and courts craft that notice requirement in light of  
7 the characteristics of the type of surveillance, preserving the values protected by government  
8 notice while accommodating the legitimate interests of law enforcement. *Richards*, 520 U.S. at  
9 394. Thus, the government is incorrect to argue that notice to Microsoft—as the recipient of the  
10 legal process, rather than the person whose privacy is invaded—is sufficient to satisfy the Fourth  
11 Amendment. Dkt. 38 at 22.

12 **III. SECTION 2703 IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL TO THE EXTENT IT AUTHORIZES**  
13 **NO-NOTICE WARRANTS FOR DIGITAL CONTENT STORED BY THIRD**  
14 **PARTIES**

15 If the government intrudes into a person’s office to seize documents from a cabinet or  
16 device, the government clearly has a default obligation to provide notice of its presence and  
17 authority, subject to recognized judicial exceptions for exigency. But under the SCA, the  
18 government not only has no baseline duty to notify the person, it can also gag the service  
19 provider. 18 U.S.C. § 2705(b). Persons should not be deprived of notice, and the government  
20 should not be excused from providing notice, merely because they use cloud services to store  
21 their private communications and information. *Riley v. California*, 134 S. Ct. 2473, 2494-95  
22 (2014) (“that technology now allows an individual to carry ... in his hand” a cell phone  
23 containing “the privacies of life” “does not make the information any less worthy of the  
24 protection for which the Founders fought”) (internal quotation marks and citations omitted);  
25 *Kyllo v. United States*, 533 U.S. 27, 34 (2001) (when confronted by new technologies, courts  
26 must “assure[] preservation of that degree of privacy against government that existed when the  
27 Fourth Amendment was adopted”). In short, “technology matters.” *United States v. Cotterman*,  
709 F.3d 952, 965 (9th Cir. 2013) (*en banc*).

1           Moreover, that the SCA expressly authorizes no-notice warrants in general alone renders  
2 it unconstitutional under the Fourth Amendment, because the statute creates a prohibited blanket  
3 exception to the notice requirement by insulating an entire category of searches from judicial  
4 review. *Richards*, 520 U.S. at 388, 394 (rejecting blanket notice exception for all felony drug  
5 investigations and stating, “in each case, it is the duty of a court confronted with the question to  
6 determine whether the facts and circumstances of the particular entry justified dispensing with  
7 the knock-and-announce requirement”).

8           Equally important, reasons for dispensing with the notice requirement recognized in other  
9 contexts are largely inapplicable to the digital searches and seizures authorized by the SCA. For  
10 instance, the knock-and-announce requirement for prior or contemporaneous notice may “give  
11 way under circumstances presenting a threat of physical violence or where police officers have  
12 reason to believe that evidence would likely be destroyed if advance notice were given.”  
13 *Richards*, 520 U.S. at 391 (internal quotation marks and citation omitted). But for searches under  
14 the SCA, where the warrant is served on an electronic communications service or remote  
15 computing service provider—not directly on the person or persons whose privacy is invaded—  
16 there is no threat of physical violence remotely comparable to that of an armed homeowner  
17 overreacting to police at the door. Nor is there any realistic chance that digital content will be  
18 destroyed were notice given to the target. The SCA expressly authorizes the government to  
19 compel service providers to preserve evidence even before a warrant is presented. 18 U.S.C. §  
20 2703(f).

21           Privacy, of course, is the key value here. Searches and seizures intrude on Fourth  
22 Amendment privacy as well as property interests, whether or not the person knows of them.<sup>7</sup> In

23 \_\_\_\_\_  
24 <sup>7</sup> First Amendment rights are also implicated. While Microsoft champions its First Amendment  
25 rights to inform its users of government intrusions, the knowledge that the government searches  
26 and seizes our communications—but does not notify us—produces the worst kind of chilling  
27 effect, a general awareness of widespread surveillance with no particular knowledge of who is  
being watched. *United States v. Jones*, 132 S. Ct. 945, 956 (2012) (Sotomayor, J., concurring)  
 (“Awareness that the Government may be watching chills associational and expressive  
freedoms.”).

1 today’s world of communications intermediaries and digital information, that concern is far  
 2 greater than before, because we cannot know about a government search or seizure of digital  
 3 information in the first place unless the government tells us (or allows the intermediary to do so).  
 4 And we cannot challenge such searches as unlawful without such knowledge. *See United States*  
 5 *v. Eastman*, 465 F.2d 1057, 1063, n.13 (3d Cir. 1972) (Wiretap Act notice provision “intended to  
 6 provide the defendant whose telephone has been subject to wiretap an opportunity to test the  
 7 validity of the wiretapping authorization”).

8 Notice does not only promote government accountability for those who are targets. If a  
 9 target’s emails are searched and seized, every party to those emails has also had his or her  
 10 privacy invaded. Notice to the target will promote accountability for them as well. More  
 11 generally, notice safeguards the greater cause of public accountability. Targets can challenge  
 12 government action with fuller information about why and how government conducts  
 13 surveillance—information that can lead to judicial, congressional or public scrutiny and thus  
 14 robust oversight of surveillance practices. Without notice, the government can avoid judicial  
 15 determinations, legislative action or public debate that might limit its discretion.<sup>8</sup>

#### 16 **IV. NOTICE BY INTERMEDIARIES TO ACCOUNTHOLDERS IS NO** 17 **SUBSTITUTE FOR GOVERNMENT NOTICE**

18 Although Microsoft is arguing for the ability to notify users of government access to their  
 19 online files, it is important to underscore that the constitutional obligation of notice belongs to  
 20 the government, not to Microsoft or any other service provider. The notice requirement has  
 21 always been about the government announcing its presence and its authority, and the lack of  
 22 notice affects the validity of a warrant. *See Freitas*, 800 F.2d at 1456 (“the absence of any notice  
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24 <sup>8</sup> The notice requirement is also essential to due process. *See Lambert v. California*, 355 U.S.  
 25 225, 228 (1957) (“Engrained in our concept of due process is the requirement of notice. Notice is  
 26 sometimes essential so that the citizen has the chance to defend charges.”); *Lavan v. City of Los*  
 27 *Angeles*, 693 F.3d 1022, 1032 (9th Cir. 2012) (“the government may not take property like a  
 thief in the night; rather, it must announce its intentions and give the property owner a chance to  
 argue against the taking”) (internal quotation marks and citation omitted).

1 requirement in the warrant casts strong doubt on its constitutional adequacy”). No private entity  
2 can cure a defective warrant.

3 Constitutional rules cannot depend on the varied and variable behavior of private actors.  
4 Microsoft could change its policy of providing notice to its customers. Other service providers  
5 may not even have a policy of always providing notice.

6 Or Microsoft may be placed in situations where it is not sure whether it can lawfully  
7 provide notice, or, more likely, where Microsoft simply lacks the knowledge that notice is now  
8 required. For instance, the Fourth Amendment requires the government to provide reasonably  
9 prompt notice in the absence of specific showings that would justify delay. *Freitas*, 800 F.2d at  
10 1456; *Dalia*, 441 U.S. at 247–48. But a service provider is unlikely to know anything about when  
11 notice need no longer be delayed. There is no reason to believe that Microsoft would know,  
12 weeks or months after it complied with a warrant, that the relevant investigation had ended or for  
13 some other reason no longer need be kept secret. Only the government possesses the relevant  
14 facts, and only the government is or can be bound by the Fourth Amendment to provide notice.<sup>9</sup>

## 15 **V. CONCLUSION**

16 For the foregoing reasons, this Court should deny the government’s motion to dismiss  
17 Microsoft’s Fourth Amendment claim.

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23 <sup>9</sup> Notice to account holders is also an international norm. *See Necessary & Proportionate:*  
24 *International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance*  
25 (May 2014), <http://necessaryandproportionate.org/principles> [<http://perma.cc/L4NU-4KMM>]  
26 (explaining that “[t]hose whose communications are being surveilled should be notified of a  
27 decision authorising Communications Surveillance with enough time and information to enable  
them to challenge the decision or seek other remedies and should have access to the materials  
presented in support of the application for authorization ... The obligation to give notice rests  
with the State, but communications service providers should be free to notify individuals of the  
Communications Surveillance, voluntarily or upon request.”).

1 Dated this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September, 2016.

Respectfully Submitted,

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on September 2, 2016, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the Court using the CM/ECF system, which will send notification of such filing to those attorneys of record registered on the CM/ECF system.

DATED this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September, 2016.

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