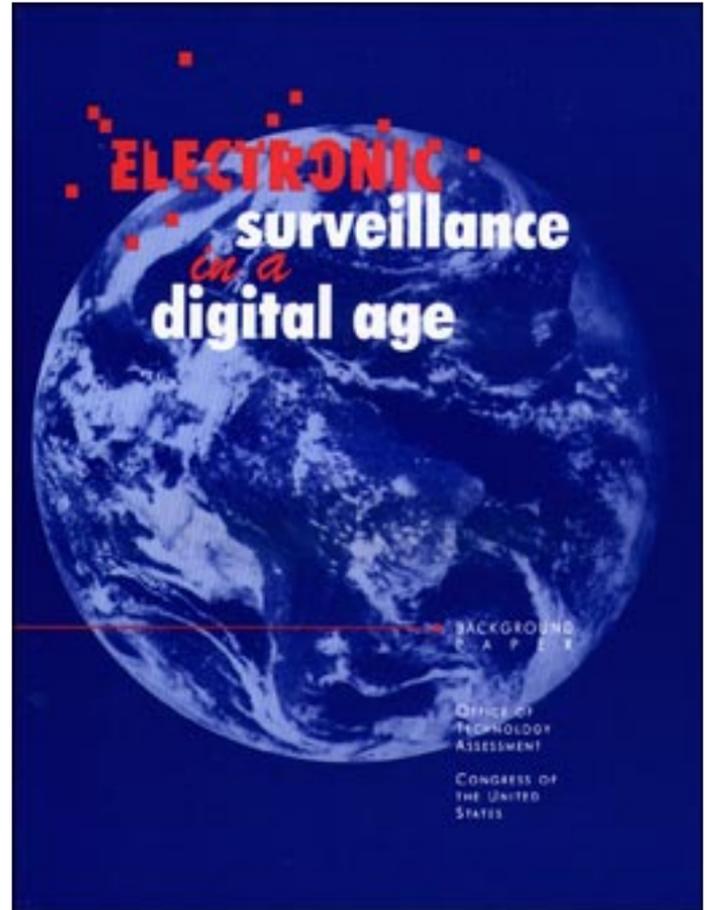


Electronic Surveillance in a Digital Age

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Foreword

Lawlessness and terrorism present new challenges to our society as the 21st Century approaches. Electronic surveillance is an invaluable tool in America's arsenal to fight crime in this era of high-speed, global communications.

Digital communications technology has recently outpaced the ability of the law enforcement agencies to implement court authorized wiretaps easily and effectively. To address this problem, the 103d Congress enacted the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (P.L. 103-414). This Act invokes the assistance of the telecommunications industry to provide technological solutions for accessing call information and call content for law enforcement agencies when legally authorized to do so.

The law enforcement community and the telecommunications industry are currently working collaboratively on solutions to implement the requirement of the Act.

On September 27, 1994, Congressman Michael G. Oxley, a member of OTA's Technology Assessment Board, requested that OTA consider the technical aspects of implementing the law that will affect the ultimate cost to the government, the industry, and the rate payers.

This background paper reviews the progress of the industry and the law enforcement agencies in implementing the Act since its approval in October 1994. OTA extends its thanks to the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS) that sponsors the Electronic Communications Service Providers (ECSP) committee, which is the forum for the collaborative efforts of the industry and law enforcement in seeking solutions for complying with the requirements of the Act. Without the willful cooperation of the ECSP, OTA would likely not have been able to accurately compile the information contained in this background paper.

Special acknowledgment is also given to the law enforcement community for its assistance that was extended through the Telecommunications Industry Liaison Unit (TILU) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.



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