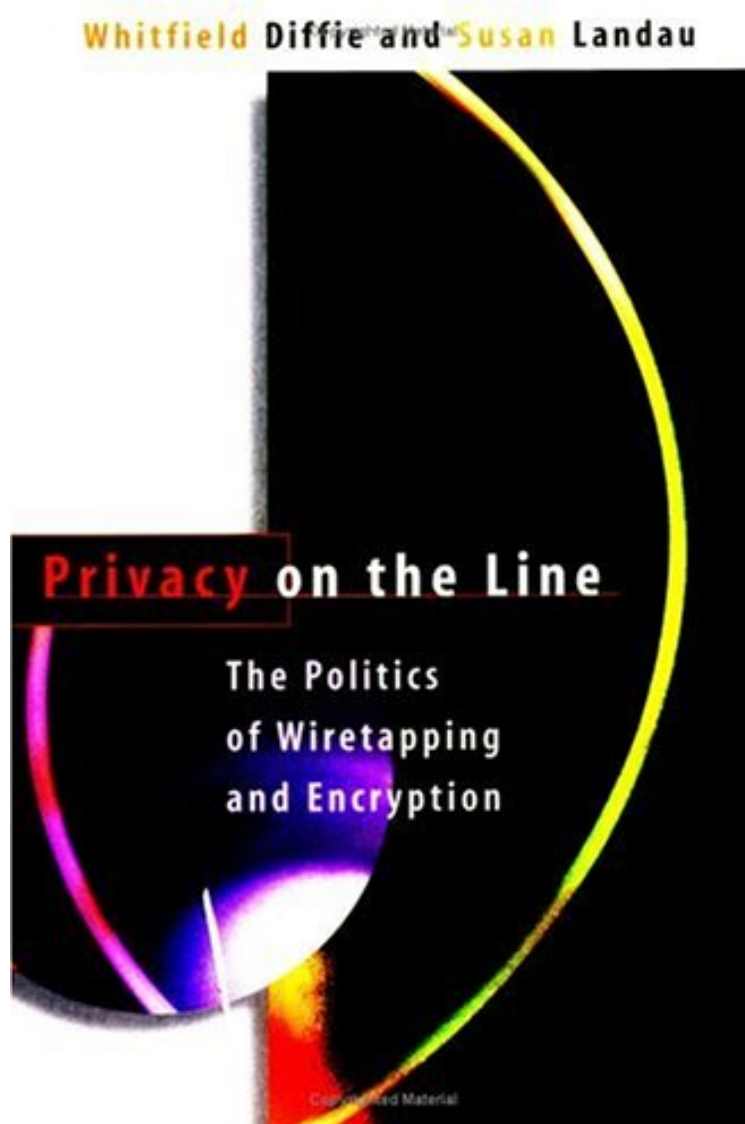


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Privacy on the Line: The Politics of Wiretapping and Encryption

Whitfield Diffie, Susan Landau
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Whitfield Diffie, Susan Landau : Privacy on the Line: The Politics of Wiretapping and Encryption before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Privacy on the Line: The Politics of Wiretapping and Encryption:

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Superb book By Ben Rothke During the civil war in Beirut some years ago, Life magazine ran a photo essay of people lounging around a hotel pool, ostensibly oblivious to the hostilities around them. In a similar sense, many people are unaware of a skirmish currently being fought on the digital

battlefield: the war for protection of personal privacy. The authors of this book assert that privacy is one of the underpinnings of a democratic society, and that if the democratic society in the United States is to survive, Americans must maintain privacy in communications. In addition, the means of protecting that privacy must be built into all current and future communication systems. In recent years, the convergence of the Internet, telecommunications, and other technologies has elevated personal privacy to new levels of importance. It is now possible to effortlessly track a person's every movement, from the path of the morning commute to the choice of sandwich at lunch. Every keystroke and e-mail transmission can likewise be monitored. Authors Whitfield Diffie and Susan Landau assert that in the "old days," when communications largely occurred face to face, privacy was simply a matter of stepping aside from those who butted in. With voice communications traveling over cellular networks, through the Internet, and via other pathways prone to compromise, the best method of securing such communications is with strong encryption. The authors argue their case effectively and engagingly, and are uniquely qualified to do so, especially in the case of Diffie. He is one of the seminal computer scientists of the last 30 years, and hardly a household doesn't benefit from security technology he helped develop. While he has written scholarly tomes and dissertations on encryption, Diffie does an excellent job here of explaining in plain English how such technologies operate and why they are crucial to a free society. The book details numerous privacy issues, from personal privacy to national security. It starts with a brief overview of cryptography, just enough to educate the reader without boring the nonmathematician. The rest of the book explores issues related to today's communications systems, such as wiretapping. A welcome surprise is that the book often reads like a Tom Clancy novel, interwoven as it is with episodes of domestic and international intrigue. Privacy on the Line is a timely and important book, relevant to every citizen, wired or not. Security professionals will find this work well worth their time. This review of mine originally appeared at [...]

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Freedom is Privacy-based By A Customer For those out of the crypto loop, the lead author, Whitfield Diffie was co-developer of public key encryption technology at Stanford several decades ago and stands as one of the most knowledgeable figures in the field of cryptography. Though the public policy aspects of cryptography are an important part of what this book is about, it is really a book with much broader implications, especially with the passage of the Patriot Act which strips U.S. citizens of any meaningful court oversight in the search and surveillance arenas. Now that the justice department has unleashed the Magic Lantern trojan horse on the public, the warnings found in this book pale by comparison since it was written before 9/11 events. The author delineates the many rationale for why respect for privacy is a good idea and how arguments to the contrary are basically flawed. Those in law enforcement and national security roles cyclically lobby for totalitarian capabilities, get them, become insatiable with MKULTRA type scenarios, get discovered, get their hands slapped and start over again when the headlines subside. Meanwhile taxpayers take a beating in lost jobs, ruined reputations, unwarranted jail time, suicides and the like. Since it is obvious that lawmakers have been delinquent in learning these lessons, what will happen when someone detonates a nuclear device in a large city and the justice department introduces legislation for mandatory implants? How will you be able to turn back after that? Tick, tick, tick... Read Diffie, think hard about lessons unlearned and what you can do about it. Ask your lawmakers to MAKE NEW MISTAKES.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Excellent reading; critical towards US govt perspectives By A Customer This is an excellent viewpoint into personal privacy issues in contemporary society. I recommend it to people interested in understanding the current issues associated with govt legislation of cryptography and personal privacy. The book is written from a viewpoint critical of the US govt position and it serves as an excellent balance to law enforcement writings on government requirements for key escrow systems.

1999 IEEE-USAB Award for Distinguished Literary Contributions Furthering Public Understanding of the Profession. and Winner of the 1998 Donald McGannon Award for Social and Ethical Relevance in Communication Policy Research Telecommunication has never been perfectly secure, as a Cold War culture of wiretaps and international spying taught us. Yet many of us still take our privacy for granted, even as we become more reliant than ever on telephones, computer networks, and electronic transactions of all kinds. Whitfield Diffie and Susan Landau argue that if we are to retain the privacy that characterized face-to-face relationships in the past, we must build the means of protecting that privacy into our communication systems. Diffie and Landau strip away the hype surrounding the policy debate to examine the national security, law enforcement, commercial, and civil liberties issues. They discuss the social function of privacy, how it underlies a democratic society, and what happens when it is lost.