Carnivore

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Carnivore is the FBI's Internet wiretapping program. But make no mistake, all governments have a similar program running.

Carnivore is a program that is made to sniffs through suspected emails, but can easily be modified to sniff all internet traffic.

The principle is good, whenever the FBI suspect someone of doing something illegal, they can go to the judge and ask if they can monitor his email. If the judge agrees they go to the ISP and set up a server, that monitors the traffic the FBI is allowed to monitor.

Of course you can always ask if this doesn't limit privacy. The system is open for misuse. Here are some links that give you more information:

* The official page of the FBI