



TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2005

### Big Brother Is Watching What You Read

by Michael in New York on [6/21/2005 07:46:00 PM](#)

John Ashcroft lied when he said the Justice Department really wasn't interested in what you were reading. And Bush lied when he said that the gov't really, really needed the power to go on fishing expeditions in libraries and bookstores without a warrant but they would never actually use it.

Now this gets tricky, because under the Patriot Act, libraries aren't allowed to say if they've been approached by the Justice Dept. under the auspices of the UnPatriotic Act. But the American Library Association did a sideways survey and found **libraries have been approached by federal, state and local officials with subpoenas and informal requests for info dozens of times.** (Keep in mind, the feds sometimes work through local officials to make these requests.)

There were 137 formal requests or demands for information in [the survey's] time, 49 from federal officials and the remainder from state or local investigators. Federal officials have sometimes used local investigators on joint terrorism task forces to conduct library inquiries.

In addition, the survey found that 66 libraries had received informal law enforcement requests without an official legal order, including 24 federal requests. Association officials said the survey results, if extrapolated from the 500 public libraries that responded, would amount to a total of some 600 formal inquires since 2001....

Ms. Sheketoff at the library association acknowledged that critics of the study may accuse the group of having a stake in the outcome of the Patriot Act debate. "Sure, we have a dog in this fight, but the other side has been mocking us for four years over our 'baseless hysteria,' and saying we have no reason to be concerned," she said. "Well, these findings say that we do have reason to be concerned."

Now keep in mind, if the Feds have a hot clue, in the past they could and have gotten a warrant to obtain info to catch criminals or terrorists. (That's how they busted the Unabomber and the Zodiac Killer.) So why this need for broad, unlimited totalitarian-like powers without the checks and balance of a judge?

Thanks Bush for turning libraries into symbols of fear where the government watches your every move and high school students doing some research could become the target of a probe. Reading is Dangerous. Knowledge is Weakness. Hello Big Brother.



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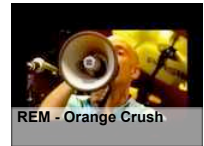
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