

# The Moral Character of Cryptographic Work

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**Abstract.** Cryptography rearranges power: it configures who can do what, from what. This makes cryptography an inherently *political* tool, and it confers on the field an intrinsically *moral* dimension. The Snowden revelations motivate a reassessment of the political and moral positioning of cryptography. They lead one to ask if our inability to effectively address mass surveillance constitutes a failure of our field. I believe that it does. I call for a community-wide effort to develop more effective means to resist mass surveillance. I plea for a reinvention of our disciplinary culture to attend not only to puzzles and math, but, also, to the societal implications of our work.

**Keywords:** cryptography · democracy · ethics · mass surveillance · privacy · Snowden revelations · social responsibility

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\* Work on the paper and talk associated to this abstract has been supported by NSF Grant CNS 1228828. Many thanks to the NSF for their continuing support.