

Best Buy Sued For Selling Spy Services Against Consumers And Selling Back-Door'd Electronics To Spy On Consumers

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CBS Local — A child pornography case against a California doctor has revealed that Geek Squad technicians have worked with the FBI to uncover data on customer's computers for years. One non-profit is now saying that the nature of the FBI's relationship with the techs may have violated the U.S. Constitution.

Digital rights non-profit Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit last year after it was discovered that the FBI allegedly paid Geek Squad employees to go through their client's computers while they're being repaired.

One such search led to felony child porn charges against Dr. Mark Rettenmaier after a technician reportedly went through the oncologist's deleted files and called the FBI in 2011. In 2017, a judge ruled that the images found in Dr. Rettenmaier's computer could not be considered child porn and the invasive search was illegal. All charges were dropped and the [case was dismissed](#) after Judge Cormac Carney said an FBI agent made "false and misleading statements" to obtain a search warrant for the doctor's house.

[EFF says](#) their FOIA request discovered that Geek Squad's parent company, Best Buy, has been working with the FBI for at least 10 years. A memo acquired in the lawsuit shows that Best Buy hosted a meeting and tour of their Kentucky repair facility for the FBI's "Cyber Working Group" in 2008. The memo also admitted that agents "maintained close liaison with the Geek Squad's management in an effort to glean case initiations and to support the division's Computer Intrusion and Cyber Crime programs."

Other court records uncovered in the FOIA search found that Geek Squad techs [were paid](#) between \$500 and \$1,000 to actively search a client's computer. Like the ruling in Dr. Rettenmaier's case, the reports have raised concerns that the FBI is using Geek Squad to bypass the Fourth Amendment which prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures.

A Best Buy spokesperson denied the claims in 2017. Jeff Shelman said their techs don't do "anything other than what is necessary to solve the customer's problem," according to [The Washington Post](#). The spokesperson added that if illegal

material is found during those repairs, Geek Squad is obligated to contact law enforcement.



New documents reveal FBI paid Geek Squad repair staff as informants (zdnet.com)

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