

VFI Executive Briefing

A weekly roundup of technology news

February 29 – March 4, 2016

Microsoft on the Issues Blog [Our Legal Brief in Support of Apple](#) (Brad Smith)

Today, Microsoft joined with a number of other leading technology companies to file a [legal brief](#) in support of Apple, as the company fights an FBI request to unlock an encrypted iPhone that belonged to one of the shooters in the terrible act of terrorism that took place in December in San Bernardino. While the companies that signed this brief are often fierce competitors, our unity with Amazon.com, Box, Cisco, Dropbox, Evernote, Facebook, Google, Mozilla, Nest Labs, Pinterest, Slack, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Yahoo, reflects our deep, shared concerns about the potential ramifications of this case for technology and for our customers. At stake are fundamental questions about privacy, safety, and the rule of law.

Wired [Forcing Apple to Hack That iPhone Sets a Dangerous Precedent](#)

ARE APPLE AND other tech companies somehow against America's national security if they create uncrackable encryption software that government investigators or even the company's own engineers can't break into? That's the question coming to a head in the controversy over whether or not Apple should be forced to engineer new software to allow the FBI to unlock the iPhone used by one of the terrorists from the San Bernardino attack that killed 14 people in my home state of California last year.

New York Times [E.U. and U.S. Release Details on Trans-Atlantic Data Transfer Deal](#)

American and European officials released details on Monday about a new trans-Atlantic data transfer agreement, prompting a new round of debate about how companies like Google move digital information between the two regions. The pact is the formal version of an agreement hashed out in early February after often-bitter negotiations, revamping the rules for how technology giants like Facebook and other conglomerates like General Electric look up, collect and manage online data, including social media posts, search queries and e-commerce purchases.

Wall Street Journal [Microsoft Shores Up Its Cyberattack Defenses](#) (subscription required)

With a touch of a button on the wall outside Microsoft Corp.'s Cyber Defense Operations Center, opaque windows turn clear, offering visitors a glimpse of the high-tech bunker where the software giant's security engineers work to thwart hackers. The new facility is at the heart of Microsoft's campaign to rebuild its reputation for security at a time when the number of potential targets for

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cyberattacks—from smartphones to corporate servers and Web services—has exploded.

The Hill [One year later, net neutrality fight enters new phase](#)

The fight over net neutrality is entering a new phase, one year after the Federal Communications Commission approved the landmark Internet rules. Regulators are moving to develop new standards, even as critics push forward to have the courts or Congress curb or strike down the rules down entirely. Friday marked the one-year anniversary of the FCC vote adopting new rules ensuring that all Internet traffic is treated in the same way.

New York Times [Why a Push for Online Privacy Is Bogged Down in Washington](#)

In February 2012, the White House introduced a blueprint for the Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights, intended to give Americans the ability to exercise control over what personal details companies collected from them and how the data was used. In his introduction to the report, President Obama went further, writing that his “administration will work to advance these principles and work with Congress to put them into law.”

GeekWire [Microsoft adds Super Tuesday election predictions to Bing’s fortune telling capabilities](#)

Bing may have been developed as a search engine, but Microsoft is increasingly using its power to predict the future. In recent months, we’ve seen it prognosticate on who will win Super Bowl and March Madness, and it even called Leo’s win at last night’s Oscars. But now it is moving onto even more serious topic: politics.

Wired [Twitter, Google and AP Launch Tool To Monitor Election Buzz](#)

THE MEDIA HAS had an outsized impact on the whims of voters this election cycle. But often, it’s social media and other online activity that drives the 24-hour news cycle. Conversations that start with the online pundits, quickly become the leading narrative of the day, which in turn, drive the rise of candidates like—you guessed it—Donald Trump. Which is why today The Associated Press is launching a new partnership with Twitter and Google, which aims to visualize all this online chatter.

Fortune [Microsoft Redoubles Support For Apple In Fight Against FBI](#)

Microsoft on Tuesday continued to [support](#) Apple in its ongoing legal battle with the Justice Department over helping to unlock a disputed iPhone used by a shooter during the San Bernardino attacks. At the annual [RSA Conference](#) on

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cyber security, Microsoft chief legal counsel Brad Smith reiterated the need for businesses to work together and speak up against the government's call for easier access to encrypted data.

New York Times [Apple Wins Ruling in New York iPhone Hacking Order](#)

A federal magistrate judge on Monday denied the United States government's request that Apple extract data from an iPhone in a drug case in New York, giving the company's pro-privacy stance a boost as it battles law enforcement officials over opening up the device in other cases. The ruling, from Judge James Orenstein in New York's Eastern District, is the first time that the government's legal argument for opening up devices like the iPhone has been put to the test.

Gadgets 360 [Technology Has Changed the Patent World](#)

Apple just suffered an important legal defeat to Samsung in its battle over patents. This is good because Apple's claims were frivolous; its patents were questionable; and its use of litigation to hold back a competitor set another wrong precedent for the industry. Because of these patent wars and patent trolls, technology companies are divesting huge resources to defend themselves rather than advancing their innovations. This is the equivalent of nuclear arms race and is a lose-lose situation.

New York Times [White House Officials Soften Approach at RSA Conference](#)

SAN FRANCISCO — Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch joined a parade of Obama administration officials to tech's home turf on Tuesday. Their message: National security depends on the industry's cooperation. The heavyweights from Washington arrived against the backdrop of Apple's fight with the Federal Bureau of Investigation over access to an iPhone and a growing fissure between Washington and Silicon Valley.

New York Times [Defense Secretary Takes Position Against a Data 'Back Door'](#)

SAN FRANCISCO — Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter assured an audience of computer security experts Wednesday that he was not in favor of a "back door" that would give the government access to data that is protected by encryption. Speaking at the annual RSA Conference, Secretary Carter sought common ground with companies worried by Apple's fight with the Federal Bureau of Investigation over access to an iPhone.