

# Alex Abdo

Litigation Director, Knight Institute

Alex Abdo is the litigation director of the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University. He has been involved in the conception and litigation of most of the Institute’s legal challenges.

His work has focused most recently on challenges to the use of spyware to intimidate journalists, the secrecy of the Office of Legal Counsel’s legal opinions, the digitization of mail in jails and prisons, and the legal threats issued by social media platforms to researchers hoping to illuminate the influence that the platforms are having on society. He was also involved in the Institute’s prior challenges to the government’s system of “prepublication review,” which requires millions of former employees of the intelligence agencies to submit their manuscripts to government censors prior to publication; the Institute’s groundbreaking challenge to the constitutionality of President Trump’s blocking of critics from his @realDonaldTrump Twitter account; and the Institute’s and the ACLU’s challenge to the constitutionality of the NSA’s program of “upstream surveillance,” under which the agency scans the content of U.S. persons’ international communications as they transit the internet backbone inside the United States.

Prior to joining the Institute, Abdo worked for eight years at the ACLU, where he was at the forefront of litigation relating to NSA surveillance, encryption, anonymous speech online, government transparency, and the post-9/11 abuse of detainees in U.S. custody. In 2015, he argued the appeal that resulted in the Second Circuit’s invalidation of the NSA’s call-records program.

Abdo graduated from Yale College and Harvard Law School. After law school, he clerked for the Honorable Barbara M.G. Lynn, U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Texas,



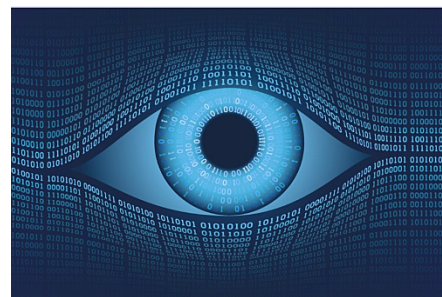

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## CONTACT

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 12E8 89D5 635A EC91 AAEA

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## SELECTED PROJECTS



### Wikimedia Foundation v. NSA

A lawsuit challenging the NSA’s “Upstream” surveillance



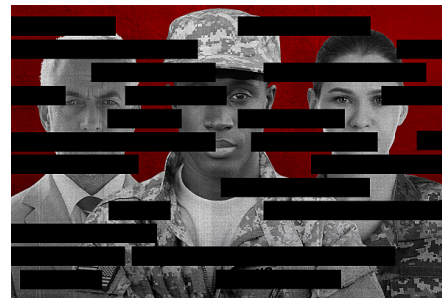
### Knight Institute v. Trump

and for the Honorable Rosemary Barkett, U.S. Circuit Judge for the Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

A lawsuit challenging President Trump's blocking of critics on Twitter

## SELECTED WORK

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### Edgar v. Haines

A lawsuit challenging the government's system of "prepublication review"

**FEBRUARY 6, 2020**

**ANALYSIS**

**Free Speech in Black Boxes**

**SEPTEMBER 15, 2018**

**ANALYSIS**

**Facebook is shaping public discourse. We need to understand how**

*THE GUARDIAN*

**JUNE 22, 2018**

**The Supreme Court Takes On the Police Use of Cellphone Records**

*THE NEW YORK TIMES*

**OCTOBER 31, 2017**

**Does the Warrantless Search and Seizure of Cellphone Records Violate the Fourth Amendment?**

*NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER*

**OCTOBER 25, 2017**

**Why Rely on the Fourth Amendment To Do the Work of the First?**

*THE YALE LAW JOURNAL*

## WRITINGS & APPEARANCES

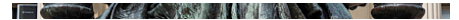
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