MonsterMind monitors everything for NSA

WASHINGTON, USA: The National Security Agency (NSA) is allegedly developing a tool that can detect cyber-attacks from an adversary by analysing Internet traffic and responding automatically, a leaked document has claimed.

Whistle-blower Edward Snowden tells Wired magazine that the NSA has developed a program called MonsterMind to thwart cyber-attacks by monitoring all Internet traffic and private communications all the time. Image: PCMag

Wired magazine revealed the existence of the program MonsterMind in an article following a series of interviews with former NSA contractor Edward Snowden.

The magazine reviewed some of the leaked documents and said MonsterMind would automate the process of hunting for the early stages of a foreign cyber-attack.

Snowden told the magazine he was troubled by this because attacks are often routed through computers in innocent third countries and the source can be "spoofed."

"You could have someone sitting in China, for example, making it appear that one of these attacks is originating in Russia," he said.

Snowden said he sees the program as a threat to privacy because it would require access to virtually all private communications from overseas to people living in the United States.

"The argument is that the only way we can identify these malicious traffic flows and respond to them is if we're analysing all traffic flows," he told Wired.

"And if we're analysing all traffic flows, that means we have to be intercepting all traffic flows and seizing private communications without a warrant, without probable cause or even a suspicion of wrongdoing. And doing so for everyone, all the time," Snowden claimed.

The NSA declined to comment on the report.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge