

FRIDAY MORNING: ALL THAT JAZZ



[image: Leo Reynolds via Flickr]

If you have to ask what jazz is, you'll never know. – Louis Armstrong

It's Friday. Don't ask, just play.

If you thought FBI vs Apple was part of a plan to break Silicon Valley on encryption, it was. This will be the big buzz today: a secret "decision memo" reveals the government set out to access encrypted user data while putting on a good front about its relations with software companies. No information available about the source (or timing) of the memo; wouldn't it be ironic if this secret memo had been hacked from a smartphone user's data?

The Atlantic looks at the government's attempt to force Apple to write code for their purposes as conscription. The secret memo bolsters this argument.

Looks like Apple may also claim the government is compelling speech. They've pulled out the big guns by hiring lawyers Ted Olson and Theodore Boutrous to work on this case.

Whiny telcos upset with Facebook eating their

lunch with WhatsApp messaging

Like they couldn't have seen this coming? Telcos in parts of the world like Central America and Europe have long charged uncompetitive rates for poor messaging service. Enter Facebook, which snapped up WhatsApp and integrated the messaging app in its social media platform. Facebook members now have a free messaging platform that works almost globally. The telcos are now upset that Facebook has eaten their text messaging profits. *iQué lástima!* Though I admit I wonder if part of this grouching is really a front for governments who don't like WhatsApp's threat to intelligence access via telcos' messaging services.

Citigroup's Corbat gets a 27% pay increase

Too Big to Fail pays very well, for a very few. For Citigroup's CEO Michael Corbat, it pays roughly \$16.5 million this past year, up from \$13 million the previous year. Corbat's raise rewards him for Citibank's improved fortunes, based in part on cutting less profitable businesses – like exiting retail banking in Argentina and Brazil.

Mercedes sued for not-so-clean diesel emissions

In a slightly different situation than with automaker VW, Daimler's Mercedes is accused of selling diesel powered vehicles that do not meet emissions standards at low temperatures. The lawsuit was filed yesterday in New Jersey by a vehicle owner in Illinois, based on information published in Der Spiegel and the results of a study conducted by independent testing agency TNO for the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. The problem at the heart of the suit:

“...the device in Mercedes's diesel models turns off pollution controls at temperatures below 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 Celsius), allowing the autos to violate emissions standards, according to the complaint.”

Mercedes did not disclose to buyers that its

BlueTec technology, a system relying on use of urea-based NOX reduction, emitted NOX levels well above emissions standards at low temperatures. I would not be surprised to see more cases soon against Daimler and its Mercedes brand as BlueTec technology has been used in both passenger vehicles and commercial trucks for most of the last ten years.

On our mind: SKYNET

We haven't forgotten the issue of U.S. military killing innocents *Oops!* from the sky based on metadata. Worth reading:

- The NSA's SKYNET program may be killing thousands of innocent people (Ars Technica)
- Has a rampaging AI algorithm really killed thousands in Pakistan? (The Guardian)

A "machine learning algorithm"? Imagine this in self-driving cars, hijacked via backdoors by hackers and governments. The ethics behind this technology must be widely debated in public now, before it moves beyond its already-abused role in drone-based warfare.

Should be an entertaining Friday; watch for government spokespersons to indulge in a lot of fancy-footwork jazz today.