

# Official requests up for Web data: Google

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"This is the sixth time we've released this data, and one trend has become clear: government surveillance is on the rise," Google senior policy analyst Dorothy Chou said.

In the first half of 2012, Google received 20,938 requests for data from government entities around the world related to 34,614 accounts, according to the US tech giant's semiannual Transparency Report.

The number was up nearly 15 percent from the prior six-month period.

The largest number came from the United States, with a total of 7,969 data requests, Google said, adding that it complied in 90 percent of those cases.

Second on the list was India with 2,319 requests, with Google complying in 64 percent of the cases. The other top data requesters were Brazil (1,566), France (1,546), Germany (1,533) and Britain (1,425).

Google said official requests to remove content from Google pages spiked to 1,791 in the first six months of 2012, from 1,048 in the prior six months.

The figure includes court orders as well as requests from officials or police, Google said. The largest number of requests related to defamation, followed by privacy and security.

Other reasons for removal included impersonation, pornography, [hate speech](#), copyright or [national security](#).

Google said it complied with 52 percent of the requests in the latest six-month period.

Google also said that in some cases it received fake court orders for content removal and that each case requires an examination of "the [legitimacy](#) of the documents."

[Google](#) began the report in 2010, updating every six months as part of its

effort to highlight [censorship](#) and promote openness on the Internet.

"We think it's important to shine a light on how [government actions](#) could affect our users," Chou said in a blog posting.

"When we first launched the Transparency Report in early 2010, there wasn't much data out there about how governments sometimes hamper the free flow of information on the Web."

Chou said the report "is only an isolated sliver showing how governments interact with the Internet, since for the most part we don't know what requests are made of other technology or telecommunications companies."

"But we're heartened that in the past year, more companies like Dropbox, LinkedIn, Sonic.net and Twitter have begun to share their statistics too," Chou added.

"Our hope is that over time, more data will bolster public debate about how we can best keep the Internet free and open."

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