

Twitter says government data requests rise

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Twitter said Monday that worldwide requests from governments about its users rose nearly 20 percent in second half of 2012 as it sought to raise awareness about "invasive" actions.

The popular messaging platform said information requests in the July-December period numbered 1,009, up from 849 in the prior six months.

In launching a revamped "transparency report" modeled after one by Google, [Twitter](#) said it hopes the data can be useful to those seeking to keep an [open Internet](#).

"We believe the open exchange of information can have a positive global impact," Twitter legal policy manager Jeremy Kessel said in a blog post marking what activists have dubbed Data Privacy Day.

"To that end, it is vital for us (and other Internet services) to be transparent about government requests for user information and government requests to withhold content from the Internet; these growing inquiries can have a serious chilling effect on [free expression](#)—and real [privacy implications](#)."

Kessel said Twitter seeks "to raise [public awareness](#) about these invasive requests" and "to enable policy makers to make more informed decisions."

"All of our actions are in the interest of an open and safe Internet," he said.

The information requests cited by Twitter sought user account information, "typically in connection with [criminal investigations](#) or cases," the company said.

Twitter said the overwhelming majority of information requests, 815 of the total, came from the United States. The company complied with at least part of the request in 57 percent of cases worldwide and 69 percent of US cases.

In the United States, where more detailed information was provided, Twitter said 60 percent of information requests came from law enforcement. Some 19 percent of requests used a search warrant and 11

percent a court order.

Twitter said it notifies users of the requests except when prohibited by court order—which occurred in 20 percent of cases.

The data showed the number of removal requests rose from six to 42 in the same period while copyright notices fell from 3,378 to 3,268.

Removal requests often come from governments for content which may be illegal in specific countries. Copyright notices are related to infringement.

[Google](#) last week reported a "steady increase" in government requests to hand over data from Internet users in the second half of 2012.

The Web giant's semiannual "transparency report" showed the most requests came from the United States, with 8,438 requests for information about 14,868 users.

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