

Censors increasingly take aim at Google content

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An user checks Google at a cybercafe in Brasilia, on April 9, 2008. Google on Thursday released data showing that requests by governments to censor the Internet giant's content have hit new heights, with Brazil and the United States leading the way.

Google on Thursday released data showing that requests by governments to censor the Internet giant's content have hit new heights, with Brazil and the United States leading the way.

Google received 2,285 government requests to remove content from its properties, including YouTube and search pages, in the second half of last year as compared to 1,811 requests in the first six months, according to its latest Transparency Report.

The requests related to 24,179 pieces of content, up from 18,070 items, the California-based [Internet giant](#) said.

"As we've gathered and released more data over time, it's become increasingly clear that the scope of government attempts to censor content on Google services has grown," Google legal director Susan Infantino said in a blog post.

"In more places than ever, we've been asked by governments to remove political content that people post on our services."

Google launched its semi-annual transparency reports three years ago, saying its intent is to "shine some light on the scale and scope of government requests for [censorship](#) and data around the globe."

In the second half of last year, Google logged notable increases in content removal requests from Brazil and Russia, and fielded inquiries from 20 countries regarding YouTube posts of clips from the controversial '[Innocence](#) of Muslims' film, which sparked violent protests around the world.

The spike from Brazil was attributed in large part to local law banning commentary critical of candidates during elections, and all but 57 of the 697 removal requests came in the form of court orders, according to the report.

"We're appealing many of these cases, on the basis the content is protected by freedom of expression under the Brazilian Constitution,"

Infantino said.

Google only received 191 content removal requests from Brazil in the first half of last year, prior to the fall [election season](#).

Requests from Russia to remove [content](#) from Google jumped from six in the first half of last year to 114 in the second half, with all but seven of them citing a law that took effect there in the fall, according to the report.

Google said that while video clips from 'Innocence of [Muslims](#)' did not violate [YouTube](#) community guidelines it restricted views in several countries to comport with local laws and temporarily blocked it in Egypt and Libya.

The United States was second to Brazil in the number of requests, filing 321 in the second half of last year, according to the report.

Germany, India, and Turkey filled out the top-five list in that order, with 231, 160, and 147 requests respectively, [Google](#) said.

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