

Government data requests up 150 pct in five years, Google says

September 15 2014



Google said Monday that worldwide government requests for user data rose 150 percent over five years, as the Internet giant renewed its call for reforms to allow for greater disclosure.

Updating the company's twice-yearly "transparency report," Google legal director Richard Salgado said "we've seen a 15 percent increase since the second half of last year, and a 150 percent jump since we first began publishing this data in 2009."

In the US, the increases were 19 percent and 250 percent, respectively, and do not include orders from a secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court or "national security letters" from the FBI.

"This increase in [government](#) demands comes against a backdrop of ongoing revelations about government surveillance programs," Salgado said.

"Despite these revelations, we have seen some countries expand their surveillance authorities in an attempt to reach service providers outside their borders."

Salgado added that while governments "have a legitimate and important role in fighting crime and investigating national security threats" reforms are needed for greater oversight and transparency "to maintain public confidence in both government and technology."

Google said it received 31,698 government data requests in the last six months of 2013, affecting some 48,000 accounts.

The company said it provided some data in 65 percent of the cases.

The United States produced the largest number of requests, 12,539, followed by Germany (3,338) and France (3,002), the report said.

The report covers requests from [law enforcement agencies](#) and court orders. But Google is not allowed to release detailed figures on US [national security](#) requests.

Google and other tech companies have gone to court to win the right to publish more detailed figures, and have been urging lawmakers to join this effort.

The report comes with US tech companies under pressure following revelations of secret government programs that scoop up vast amounts of data from Internet firms.

Tech firms including Microsoft, Google and Facebook have been seeking to release more information on government data requests, in the belief this would reassure customers.

Google said it supports a proposal pending in the US Senate that would prevent the bulk collection of Internet metadata and allow for more details to be published about the demands.

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Citation: Government data requests up 150 pct in five years, Google says (2014, September 15) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-09-pct-years-google.html>

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