

# Government requests for Facebook user data are up 24 percent in six months

November 5 2014, by Sarah Parvini, Los Angeles Times

---

Government requests for Facebook data increased 24 percent in just six months, the social media giant said Tuesday, and nearly half of those requests came from the United States.

Between January and June, governments across the globe made 34,946 requests for data, according to the Menlo Park, Calif., company's latest transparency report. The United States was responsible for 15,433 of those requests, spanning 23,667 accounts.

Facebook turned over data on about 80 percent of the cases, many of which were used for search warrants and subpoenas, the report shows. The amount of content restricted or removed because of local laws increased about 19 percent since the end of 2013.

The world's largest social network began releasing transparency reports in June 2013, after revelations that the company shared user data with the National Security Agency's secret Internet surveillance program, Prism.

"We scrutinize every government request we receive for legal sufficiency under our terms and the strict letter of the law, and push back hard when we find deficiencies or are served with overly broad requests," Facebook's deputy general counsel, Chris Sonderby, said in a statement.

Over the same period, Twitter received 2,058 [government requests](#),

1,257 of which were from the U.S. [government](#), according to its September transparency report. It shared data in 73 percent of those cases.

Google has seen a 15 percent increase in requests since the second half of last year, and a 150 percent jump since the company began publishing such data in 2009. In the United States, requests have hiked 19 percent and 250 percent, respectively.

Since last year, Facebook has been fighting bulk search warrants issued by a court in New York calling on the social network to hand over data on about 400 people - the largest request it has ever received, Sonderby said. After losing the case in the lower court, it is appealing to a New York appellate court, which will decide the case later this year.

The social network had 1.35 billion monthly active users as of September.

Facebook said it is required by federal law to wait six months before disclosing Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA, requests.

©2014 Los Angeles Times  
Distributed by MCT Information Services

Citation: Government requests for Facebook user data are up 24 percent in six months (2014, November 5) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-11-facebook-user-percent-months.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.