

Microsoft says data requests down, reforms needed

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Microsoft said Friday the number of global law enforcement requests for user data fell in 2014 as the tech giant renewed its call for surveillance reforms.

In its twice-yearly "transparency report," Microsoft said the total number of law enforcement requests received in the second half of the year was 31,002, bringing to the total for the year to 65,496—down from 72,279 a year earlier.

Some 70 percent of the requests came from five countries—the United States, France, Britain, Germany and Turkey, the report said.

Microsoft deputy counsel John Frank said in a statement that while [law enforcement authorities](#) sometimes need to access data to protect the public, "access should be governed by the rule of law, and not by mandating back doors or weakening the security of our products and services."

He said revelations about vast government surveillance programs underscore a need for reforms in the United States and more clarity in international agreements on cross-border data sharing.

"We need commitments that governments will not hack [technology companies](#) to access data outside the legal process," he said.

"Efforts to hack technology companies have undermined confidence in the security and privacy of online communications."

Microsoft also released data on US national security data requests, in accordance with requirements that it provide only ranges of numbers with a lag of at least six months.

The report showed that the company received between zero and 999 orders from a secret US intelligence court from January through June 2014—the same range it has reported since 2011.

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