

Microsoft presses US on data request disclosures

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Microsoft Corp. legal chief Brad Smith speaks on September 17, 2007 in Luxembourg. Microsoft said Tuesday it had asked the US government for permission to disclose details of how it handles national security data requests, citing "inaccuracies" in recent media reports.

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Microsoft general counsel Brad Smith said the company had asked the

US attorney general "to personally take action to permit Microsoft and other companies to share publicly more complete information about how we handle national security requests for customer information."

"We believe the US constitution guarantees our freedom to share more information with the public, yet the government is stopping us," Smith said in a blog posting.

He said the government has yet to respond to a petition filed in court on June 19 seeking permission to publish the number of [national security](#) requests the company has received.

"We hope the attorney general can step in to change this situation," Smith said, adding that in the interim, "we want to share as much information as we currently can."

He added that "there are significant inaccuracies in the interpretations of leaked [government documents](#) reported in the media last week."

The reports indicated Microsoft facilitated the government's ability to tap video calls on Skype, a service Microsoft acquired in 2011.

Smith said that in regard to Skype, "we only respond to legal government demands, and we only comply with orders for requests about specific accounts or identifiers."

He added that technical changes made to Skype in 2012 "were not made to facilitate greater [government](#) access to audio, video, messaging or other customer data."

Smith said the policy is similar for its Outlook email service and SkyDrive cloud service.

"We still require governments to follow legal processes when requesting [customer data](#)," Smith said.

Apple, Facebook, Microsoft and other Internet titans have come under heightened scrutiny since word leaked of vast, covert [surveillance programs](#) US authorities insist target only foreign terror suspects and have helped thwart attacks.

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