

Google says government data requests surging

WASHINGTON, USA: Google said the number of requests for user data from governments and law enforcement has doubled since 2010, as it renewed a push to reveal more about countries seeking to monitor data.



Google says requests for user data have risen sharply. Image: Victor Habbick [Free Digital Photos](#)

In its updated "transparency report" covering the first six months of this year, Google said the largest number of requests -- 10,918 -- came from the United States.

That accounted for more than a third of the 25,879 requests Google received worldwide.

The California Internet company renewed its argument for the ability to reveal more about US national security requests, disclosures of which must be lumped in with law enforcement inquiries.

"We believe it's your right to know what kinds of requests and how many each government is making of us and other companies," Google's legal director Richard Salgado said in a blog posting.

US prohibits publication of some figures

"However, the US Department of Justice contends that US law does not allow us to share information about some national security requests that we might receive," he added.

"Specifically, the US government argues that we cannot share information about the requests we receive (if any) under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. But you deserve to know that this is the position," Salgado said.

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

The overall number of requests rose from 20,938 in the last six months of 2012 considerably higher than the 12,539 it received in the the last six months of 2009.

This year India had the second largest number of requests, 2,691, followed by Germany with 2,311, France with 2,011 and Britain with 1,274.

"This comes as usage of our services continues to grow. And these numbers only include the requests we're allowed to publish," Salgado said.

Google provided at least some data in 83% of US requests and in 65% of global requests.

US technology companies are under pressure following revelations of a secret government programme that scoops up vast amounts of data from Internet firms.

Technology firms including Microsoft, Google and Facebook have been seeking to release more information on government data requests, in the belief this would reassure customers that their privacy is being protected as much as possible.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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