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Washington, DC 20510

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Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dutch Ruppersberger
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House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
U.S. House of Representatives
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We the undersigned are writing to urge greater transparency around national security-related requests by the US government to Internet, telephone and web-based service providers for information about their users and subscribers.

First, the US government should ensure that those companies who are entrusted with the privacy and security of their users' data are allowed to regularly report statistics reflecting:

- The number of government requests for information about their users made under specific legal authorities such as Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act, Section 702 of the FISA Amendments Act, the various National Security Letter (NSL) statutes, and others;

- The number of individuals, accounts or devices for which information was requested under each authority; and
- The number of requests under each authority that sought communications content, basic subscriber information, and/or other information.

Second, the government should also augment the annual reporting that is already required by statute by issuing its own regular “transparency report” providing the same information: the total number of requests under specific authorities for specific types of data, and the number of individuals affected by each.

As an initial step, we request that the Department of Justice, on behalf of the relevant executive branch agencies, agree that Internet, telephone and web-based service providers may publish specific numbers regarding government requests authorized under specific national security authorities, including the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) and the NSL statutes. We further urge Congress to pass legislation requiring comprehensive transparency reporting by the federal government and clearly allowing for transparency reporting by companies without requiring companies to first seek permission from the government or the FISA Court.

Basic information about how the government uses its various law enforcement-related investigative authorities has been published for years without any apparent disruption to criminal investigations. We seek permission for the same information to be made available regarding the government’s national security-related authorities.

This information about how and how often the government is using these legal authorities is important to the American people who are entitled to have an informed public debate about the appropriateness of those authorities and their use, and to international users of US-based service providers who are concerned about the privacy and security of their communications.

Just as the United States has long been an innovator when it comes to the Internet and products and services that rely upon the Internet, so too should it be an innovator when it comes to creating mechanisms to ensure that government is transparent, accountable, and respectful of civil liberties and human rights. We look forward to working with you to set a standard for transparency reporting that can serve as a positive example for governments across the globe.

Thank you.

Companies

Apple
 CloudFlare
 CREDO Mobile
 Digg
 Dropbox
 Evoca
 Facebook
 Google
 Heyzap
 LinkedIn
 Meetup
 Microsoft
 Mozilla
 Reddit
 Sonic.net
 Tumblr
 Twitter
 Wikimedia
 Yahoo!

Civil Society Organizations

Access
 American Booksellers Foundation for Free
 Expression
 American Society of News Editors
 American Civil Liberties Union
 Americans for Tax Reform
 Center for Democracy & Technology
 Center for Effective Government
 Committee to Protect Journalists
 Competitive Enterprise Institute
 The Constitution Project
 Demand Progress
 Electronic Frontier Foundation
 First Amendment Coalition
 Foundation for Innovation and Internet Freedom
 Global Network Initiative
 GP-Digital
 Human Rights Watch
 National Association of Criminal Defense

YouNow

Trade Associations & Investors

Boston Common Asset Management
Computer & Communications Industry
Association
Domini Social Investments
Internet Association
New Atlantic Ventures
Union Square Ventures
Y Combinator

Lawyers

National Coalition Against Censorship
New America Foundation's Open Technology
Institute
OpenTheGovernment.org
Public Knowledge
Reporters Committee for Freedom of The Press
Reporters Without Borders
TechFreedom
World Press Freedom Committee