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Law Enforcement Rarely Uses Search Warrants in Getting Twitter Data

By [SOMINI SENGUPTA](#)

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United States law-enforcement agencies by and large do not establish probable cause or obtain a search warrant from an impartial judge before they seek information about a Twitter user, the company said Monday in its [second transparency report](#).

The company said it received a little over 1,000 requests for information between July and December 2012. Most came from the United States, and in nearly seven out of 10 instances, the company complied with the data request.

Japan, Brazil, Britain and France made up most of the data requests from outside the United States. Twitter's [most recent brush with a foreign government came last week](#) when a French court ordered the company to disclose the identity of the authors of Twitter posts that were racist and anti-Semitic – and in violation of French law. Twitter, which has in the past disclosed user information to foreign governments when the request has come through a United States court, has said only that it is considering its options in the French case.

The numbers are a signal of how attractive Twitter data can be for law-enforcement agencies worldwide, as millions of users use the microblogging platform to rant against politicians, announce protest marches and share homemade videos.

According to the report from the company, most requests from United States government agencies came with no

more than a subpoena, which requires a relatively low burden of proof. The company said that under federal law, the government can request basic information using a subpoena, including the e-mail address associated with an account and an Internet Protocol address.

Only 19 percent of the information requests came with a search warrant, which the company says it requires for disclosing the content of communications. Another 11 percent were accompanied by a court order, which requires a judge's approval.

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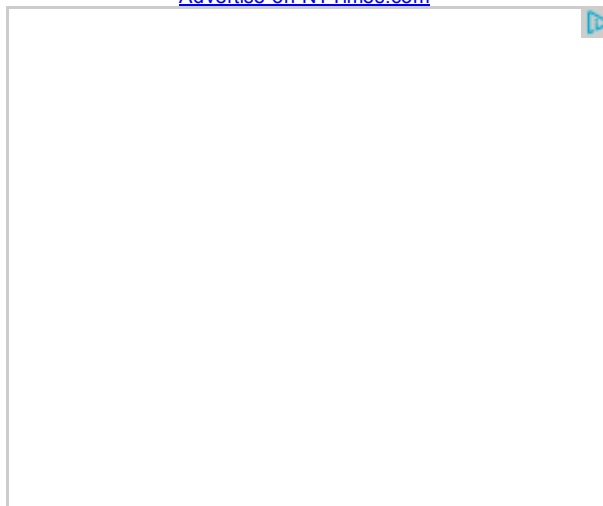
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Software	+0.02%	-2.50%	+3.98%
IT Services & Consulting	-0.01%	-1.96%	+13.79%
Communications Equipment	-0.03%	-0.29%	+1.33%
Semiconductors	-0.36%	-0.08%	+0.87%
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