

# Microsoft prods government on sharing request data

Brett Molina, USA TODAY 4:36 p.m. EDT July 16, 2013



(Photo: Ron Wurzer, Getty Images)

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Microsoft is pushing the U.S. Attorney General's office to approve the sharing of more information on how it handles customer data request from national security agencies.

In a post published Tuesday

[http://blogs.technet.com/b/microsoft\\_on\\_the\\_issues/archive/2013/07/16/responding-to-government-legal-demands-for-customer-data.aspx](http://blogs.technet.com/b/microsoft_on_the_issues/archive/2013/07/16/responding-to-government-legal-demands-for-customer-data.aspx), Brad Smith, Microsoft's general counsel, called out government officials for failing to respond to requests to share more on the number of national security queries it receives.

"We believe the U.S. Constitution guarantees our freedom to share more information with the public, yet the Government is stopping us," says Smith.

The reaction follows a detailed report from The Guardian (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2013/07/12/report-microsoft-nsa/2511857/>) claiming Microsoft worked closely with the National Security Agency to gain deep access into services such as email clients Outlook and Hotmail, cloud storage service Skydrive and video communications tool Skype.

Smith denies these claims, saying Microsoft doesn't provide blanket access to their services, only responding to "legal government demands" for specific accounts or users.

"When governments seek information from Microsoft relating to customers, we strive to be principled, limited in what we disclose, and committed to transparency," Smith says.

The Guardian report, which cites top-secret documents, says Microsoft helped the NSA circumvent its own encryption to gain access to customer data across several services.

The findings are part of a larger investigative series by The Guardian exposing Prism, a worldwide surveillance program run by the U.S. government.

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