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.
Investors
Boston Common Asset Management
Calvert Investments
Domini Social Investments
F&C Asset Management Plc
New Atlantic Ventures
Union Square Ventures
Y Combinator

Nonprofit Organizations & Trade Associations (cont’d)
Liberty Coalition
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
National Coalition Against Censorship
New America Foundation’s Open Technology Institute
OpenTheGovernment.org
Project On Government Oversight
Public Knowledge
Reporters Committee for Freedom of The Press
Reporters Without Borders
TechFreedom
Wikimedia Foundation
World Press Freedom Committee

Additional Signers as of September 30, 2013

Companies
Automattic (WordPress.com)
Data Foundry, Inc.
DreamHost
DuckDuckGo
Floor64
Foursquare
Golden Frog
Personal Democracy Media
SpiderOak
Twilio

Nonprofit Organizations & Trade Associations
AIDS Policy Project
Association of Research Libraries
Bill of Rights Defense Committee
BSA | The Software Alliance
Center for Financial Privacy and Human Rights
Consumer Action
Defending Dissent Foundation
Engine Advocacy
Freedom House
Freedom of the Press Foundation
Global Integrity
Government Accountability Project
Human Rights First
Information Technology & Innovation Foundation
Jewish Voice for Peace
Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition
NetChoice
New York Tech Meetup
OpenMedia.ca
PolitiHacks
Public Citizen
Software & Information Industry Association
TechNet
WITNESS