Twitter Transparency Report

Report 16 (Jul - Dec 2019)

Published on August 19, 2020

Information Requests

About this report

Insights into legal demands to produce account information from governments, law enforcement, and third parties around the world.

Government

Published on August 19, 2020

01. Latest Data
02. Overview
03. Analysis
04. Preservation Requests

01. Latest Data: Government

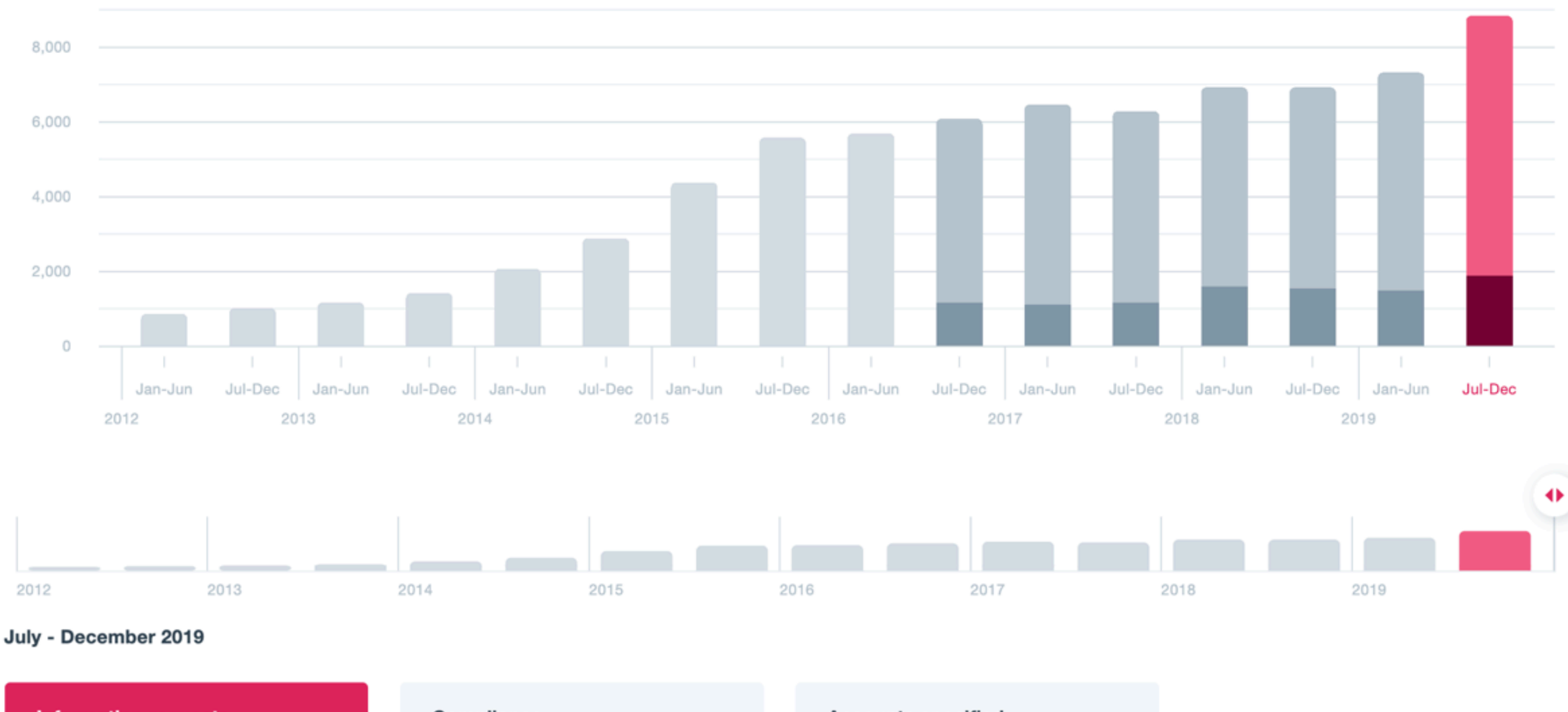
Map Bars Table

July - December 2019

Information requests	Compliance rate	Accounts specified
8.8K	40.4%	20.3K

01. Latest Data: Government

Map | **Bars** | Table



July - December 2019

Information requests	Compliance	Accounts specified
8.8K	**40.4%**	**20.3K**

02. Overview

This section covers the latest data about government information requests for Twitter and Periscope account information from around the world. These requests include a combination of routine requests and emergency requests. There are also trends and details about the global volume of requests, accounts specified, and the corresponding compliance rates, as well as insights into our related policies and global preservation requests.

Some notable changes since the last report[n]:

Information requests

+21%

Increase in **global information requests** compared to the last reporting period.

Compliance rate

-15%

Decrease in **global compliance rate** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts specified

+63%

Increase in **global accounts specified** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

Big picture

Global governments and law enforcement agencies submitted approximately 21% more information requests (combined emergency and routine requests) compared to the previous reporting period. Notably, the aggregate number of accounts specified in these requests increased by nearly 63%. The total volume of requests and specified accounts are respectively the largest we've seen to date. Twitter produced some or all of the requested information in response to 40% of these information requests.

Further analysis into these areas follow below. Additional information is available in Twitter's legal request FAQs.

Country insights

Twitter has now received government information requests from 91 different countries since 2012, including China** and Monaco, which appear in this report for the first time.

Top requesters

The United States[2] has been the top overall requesting country since the first Twitter Transparency Report, where it accounted for 80% of all global requests in 2012.

Today, the United States remains the single largest source of government requests, but now only accounts for 26% of the global volume, and 44% of global accounts specified. The second highest volume of requests originate from Japan, comprising 22% of global information requests, and nearly 14% of global accounts specified.

In comparison, requests from the next six top countries – France (12%), India (9%), South Korea (5%), Turkey (5%), the United Kingdom (5%), and Germany (4%) – together account for 40% of all global information requests, and 32% of all global accounts specified.

Worldwide

Top requesting countries (routine requests)

1. **United States**
2. **Japan**
3. **France**

United States

Twitter received **151 (+7%) more requests** from the United States, while the number of **accounts specified increased by 4,820 (+116%)** during this reporting period. This number of accounts is skewed by a single request for a large number of accounts, which Twitter publicly disclosed as associated with a state-backed information operation.

Japan

Twitter received **218 (+13%) more requests** from Japan, while the number of **accounts specified increased by 412 (+17%)** during this reporting period.

France

Twitter received **508 (+93%) more requests** from France, while the number of **accounts specified increased by 631 (+78%)** during this reporting period.

04. Preservation Requests

Twitter accepts government requests to preserve account information as outlined in our Guidelines for Law Enforcement.

Government entities issue preservation requests that direct service providers like Twitter to temporarily save information pertaining to an investigation. These requests give law enforcement, prosecutors, etc. the time needed to get the valid legal process, such as a search warrant, required to lawfully obtain that saved information. Upon receipt of a valid preservation request, we will temporarily preserve, but not disclose, a snapshot of the relevant account information for 90 days pending issuance and service of valid legal process.[7]

Global government preservation requests increased by 20%, while accounts specified increased by 43% during this reporting period.

Non-Government

01. Latest Data

02. Overview

03. Analysis

Published on August 19, 2020

01. Latest Data: Non-Government

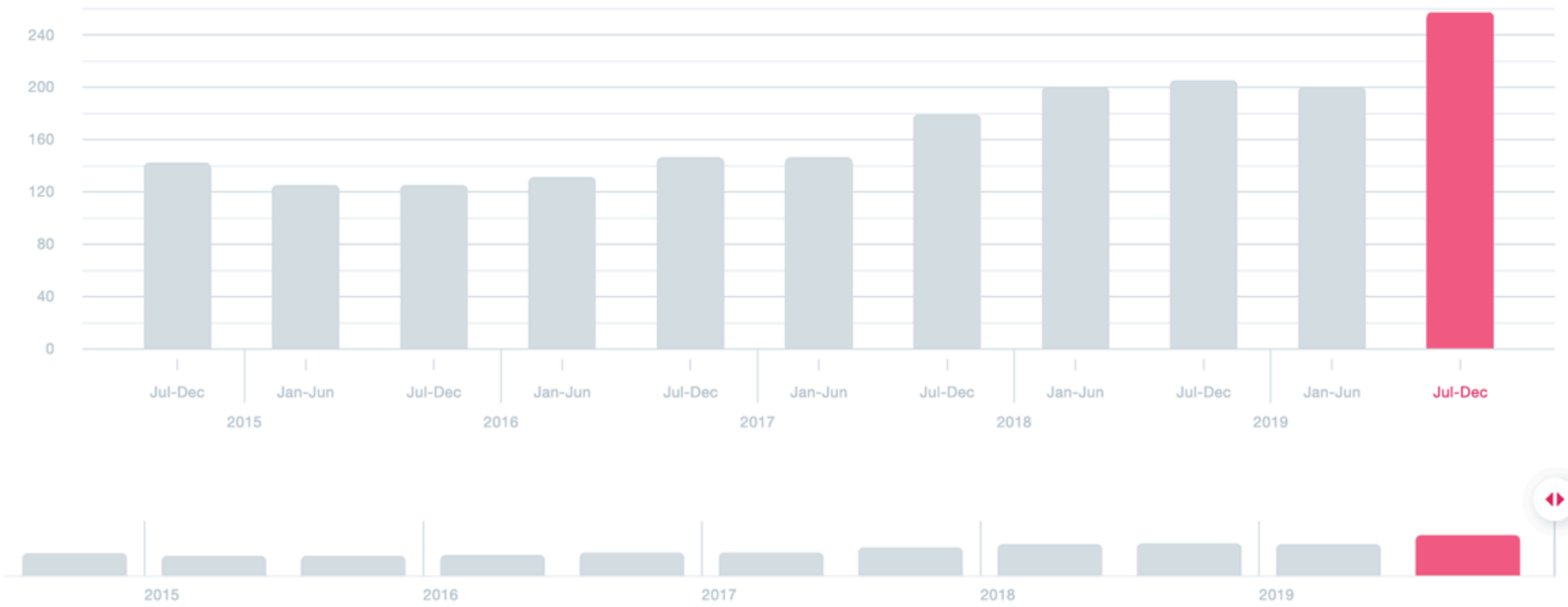
Map | Bars | Table

July - December 2019

Information requests	Compliance rate	Accounts specified	User notice
257	38.9%	729	44%

01. Latest Data: Non-Government

Map | **Bars** | Table



July - December 2019

Information requests	Compliance	Accounts specified	User notice
257	38.9%	729	44%

02. Overview

Twitter receives requests for account information from non-governmental parties around the world. These typically include civil actions, such as a divorce proceeding, as well as requests made by criminal defendants, where they are typically seeking account information in support of their legal defense.[8]

More information about non-government information requests can be found in our Help Center pages, including Accessing Your Twitter Data and Legal Request FAQ.

Information requests

+29%

Increase in **global information requests** compared to the last reporting period.

Compliance rate

+24%

Increase in **global compliance rate** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts specified

+39%

Increase in **global accounts specified** compared to the last reporting period.

User notice

+2%

Increase in **global user notice** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

Twitter received 29% more non-government information requests during this reporting period. Notably, the number of accounts specified in these requests increased by 39%, while the compliance rate increased to 39%.[9]

Twitter received its first non-government requests for account information from Hong Kong SAR and Nigeria during this reporting period.

Defending free expression

Anonymous and pseudonymous speech is important to Twitter and is central to our commitment to defend and protect the voices of our users. Twitter often receives non-government information requests to disclose account information of anonymous or pseudonymous Twitter users (i.e., requests to “unmask” the identity of the user). Twitter frequently objects to such requests, particularly in the U.S.

Twitter objected to 23 U.S. civil requests for account information that sought to unmask the identities of anonymous speakers on first amendment grounds during this reporting period. We ended up litigating six of those requests. Twitter prevailed in four cases, lost one, and one is still pending. No information was produced in response to the other 17 requests.

Footnotes

Some cases received during this reporting period may be in progress and may not be closed at the time of reporting.

Government

1. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

2. U.S. numbers in the table above include requests received from U.S. Legal Attachés stationed in various international locations, who may have submitted requests under U.S. law in part to assist their local counterparts. This type of cross-border cooperation is most likely to happen in emergency circumstances (such as those following terror attacks).

3. We evaluate such requests on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is information to support a good faith belief that there is an imminent threat involving danger of death or serious physical injury to a person. In these situations, if we have information relevant to averting or mitigating the threat, we may disclose that information to law enforcement.

However, we may not disclose data in response to emergency disclosure requests for a variety of reasons. For example:

- We may not disclose data if the request fails to identify a valid Twitter and/or Periscope account, or content on those platforms.
- We may push back to narrow requests that are overbroad, and only disclose the information relevant to averting or mitigating the specified threat.

4. Requests for Periscope account information are also reflected in the figures regarding aggregate requests.

5. We may not comply with requests for a variety of reasons. For example:

- We may not comply with requests that fail to identify a Twitter and/or Periscope account or other content on those platforms.
- We may seek to narrow requests that are overly broad.
- Account holders may have challenged the requests after we've notified them.
- We may have sought additional context from the requester and did not receive a response.
- In some cases, Twitter may challenge the request formally through litigation or informally through discussion directly with government entities.

6. Details about Twitter's user notice policy are available in our Guidelines for Law Enforcement and our Legal Request FAQ, which provides account holders with more information about what happens when we receive a request for their account information or removal of their content.

Exceptions to user notice may include exigent or counterproductive circumstances, such as emergencies regarding imminent threat to life, child sexual exploitation, or terrorism.

7. We also regularly receive preservation extension requests (not reflected in the data above) from law enforcement or government requesters. If the requester submits a lawful and timely extension request, we will make reasonable attempts to continue to preserve the same snapshot of account information for an additional 90 days pending issuance and service of valid legal process.

We may process multiple extension requests if requesters represent that they are engaged in a process for international cooperation (i.e. MLAT or letters rogatory), given these processes can take several months.

Non-Government

8. This data does not include an account holder's request for their own account information.

9. We may not comply with non-government requests for a variety of reasons. For example:

- We may not comply with requests that fail to identify a Twitter and/or Periscope account or other content on those platforms.
- We may reject requests that are directed to incorrect corporate entities.
- We may seek to narrow requests that are overly broad.
- Users may have challenged the requests after we've notified them.
- In other cases, Twitter may challenge the request formally through litigation or informally through discussion directly with non-government parties (e.g., directing non-government parties to get the information they seek directly from the other parties through discovery).

Removal Requests

About this report

Insights into legal demands to remove content from Twitter and Periscope, and other requests to remove content based on local law(s) from around the world.

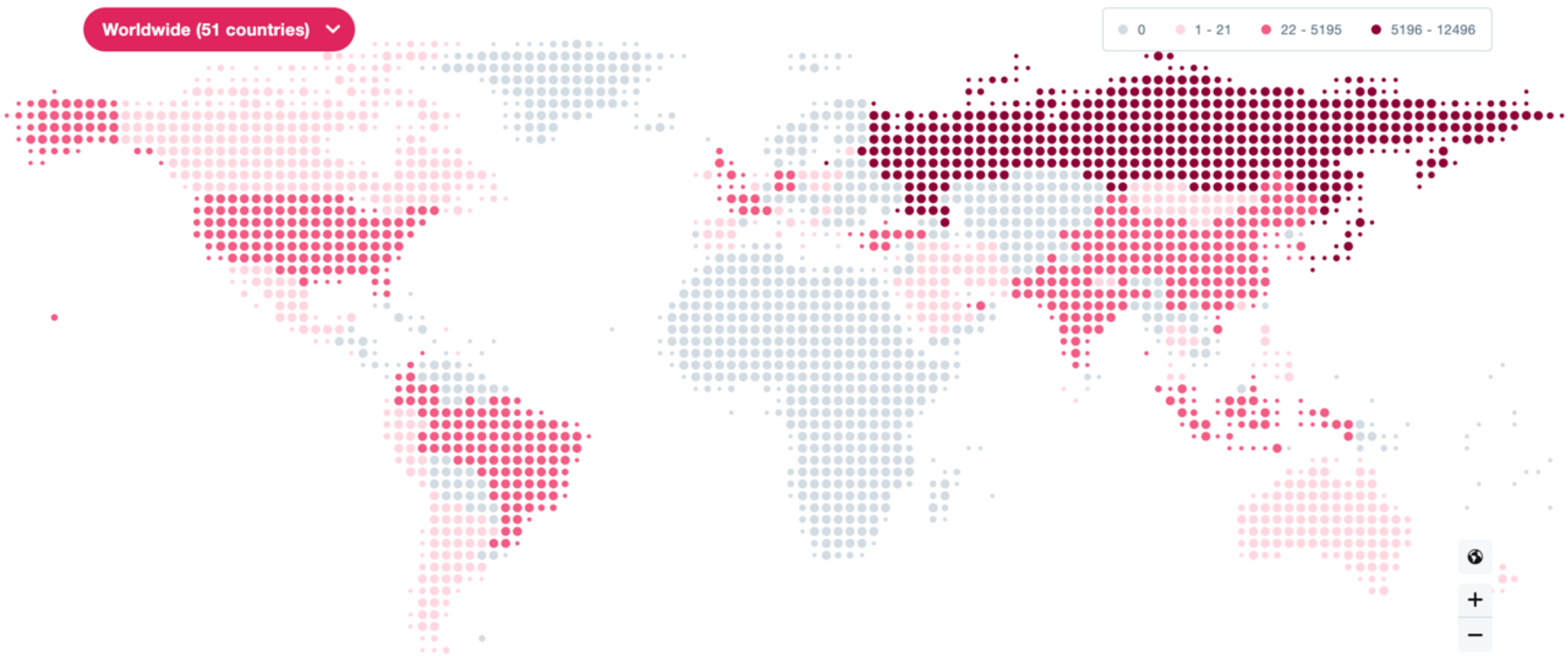
Legal Demands

Published on August 19, 2020

01. Latest Data
02. Overview
03. Analysis
04. Withheld Content
05. Un-withheld Content
06. TOS Violations
07. No Action

01. Latest Data: Legal Demands

Map | Bars | Table



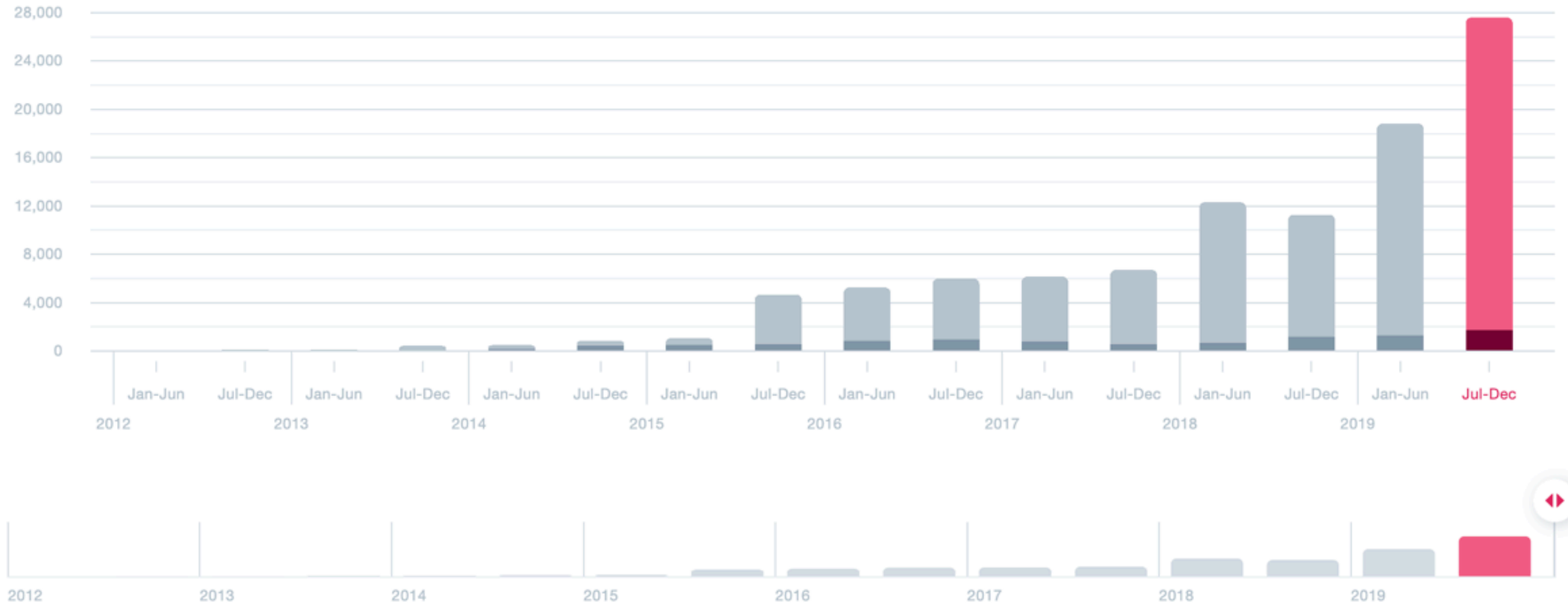
July - December 2019

Removal requests	Percentage Resulting in Action	Accounts Specified	Accounts Withheld	Tweets Withheld
27.5K	34.7%	98.6K	250	3.5K

Accounts TOS
25.3K

01. Latest Data: Legal Demands

Map | **Bars** | Table



July - December 2019

Removal requests
27.5K

Percentage of Reports Actioned
34.6%

Accounts specified
98.6K

Accounts Withheld
250

Tweets Withheld
3.5K

Accounts (TOS)
25.3K

02. Overview

This section covers the latest data about third-party legal demands that compel Twitter to remove content under our Country Withheld Content ("CWC") policy.[1]

There are also details about the latest trends in global volumes of requests, accounts specified, and the total compliance rate. The total compliance rate is a new, simplified metric that combines all of Twitter's removal actions—accounts withheld, Tweets withheld, and accounts TOS—for the first time.

Some notable changes since the last report:

Legal demands

+47%

Increase in **global legal demands** compared to the last reporting period.

NEW: Compliance rate

35%

This reporting period introduced the **global compliance rate** metric to the Removal Request Report. This new metric simplified metric combines all of Twitter's removal actions—accounts withheld, Tweets withheld, and accounts TOS.

Accounts specified

+94%

Increase in **global accounts specified** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts withheld

-29%

Decrease in **global accounts withheld** compared to the last reporting period.

Tweets withheld

+67%

Decrease in **global Tweets withheld** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts TOS

+50%

Increase in **global accounts TOS** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

Big picture

Twitter received 27,538 legal demands to remove content specifying 98,595 accounts. This is the largest number of requests and specified accounts that we've received since releasing our first transparency report in 2012. We withheld or otherwise removed some or all of the reported content in response to 35% of these global legal demands.

Country insights

This record number of legal demands originated from 51 different countries including China**, El Savador, and Peru, which appear in this report for the first time.

Top requesters

86% of the total global volume of legal demands originated from only three countries: Japan, Russia, and Turkey.

Legal demands from Japan increased by 143% this reporting period, accounting for 45% of global requests received. The 12,496 requests from Japan are primarily related to laws regarding narcotics and psychotropics, obscenity, or money lending. The next highest volume countries were Russia (22% of global legal demands) and Turkey (19% of global legal demands), which has historically been the highest requester until this reporting period.

South Korea ranked fourth in global volume (5%), followed by India as the fifth largest requester (3%) to submit legal demands to remove content. Notably, requests from South Korea decreased by 19% compared to the last reporting period, though the number of accounts specified in these requests increased by 143%.

Japan

The volume of legal demands from Japan **increased by 143%** this period, making Japan responsible for **45% of all legal demands** received worldwide.

Russia

Russian legal demands to remove content **increased by 60%** this reporting period. 62% of those requests pertained to Russian laws prohibiting the promotion of suicide.

Turkey

Requests from Turkey **decreased by 14%** during this reporting period, however the accounts specified **increased by almost 1%**.

Verified journalists and news outlets

193 accounts of verified journalists and news outlets from around the world were the subject of legal demands, representing a 58% increase during this reporting period.

In total, there were 13 Tweets withheld in Turkey due to violations of Turkish anti-terrorism laws, and four Tweets were withheld in India under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000. We took no action on the remainder of the reported verified journalists and news outlets accounts due to them falling under our protected speech policies.

Twitter filed legal objections for court orders from Turkey that involved verified journalists or news outlets, arguing that those decisions are contrary to Turkish protections of freedom of the press. None of those objections were successful during this reporting period.

Periscope

We received eight requests to remove content from Periscope, referencing seven accounts in total. Four of these requests originated from Turkey, while the others were from France, the United States, and EUROPOL, an intergovernmental organization. Two accounts were suspended under Twitter's policy prohibiting child sexual exploitation, while two others were taken down under our terrorism and violent extremism policy and illegal or certain regulated goods or services policy. No action was taken on the remainder of the reported content as it did not violate any of our content policies.

04. Withheld Content

This data includes all legal demands where we employed our Country Withheld Content ("CWC") tool during this period, resulting in either Tweets or accounts being withheld. Where permitted, Twitter provided notice to identified account holders and published copies of the underlying legal demands that resulted in withheld content to Lumen for public review.[2]

We have now used CWC in 19 countries in response to legal demands: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. During this reporting period, we withheld content at the account or Tweet level in 16 of those 19 countries, including Singapore for the first time.

Examples (Lumen links to corresponding legal demands available below[3]):

Argentina

We received a court order for defamation from an Argentinian federal civil court. This specific issue has been subject to multiple court orders since 2018. **16 Tweets were withheld** in response to this court order.

Australia

We received our first request from the Office of the eSafety Commissioner under the Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material Act 2019. Twitter **withheld the reported content** in Australia in response to the request.

India

We received a court order to remove over one thousand Tweets for sharing fake customer care numbers on Twitter. We **withheld 1,211 Tweets** in India in response to the court order.

Japan

Twitter received a court order reporting two Tweets, brought by a member of the Japanese House of Representatives, for alleged defamatory content posted against him. We **took action on two Tweets** in response to this court order.

Singapore

The Info-communications Media Development Authority (IMDA) of Singapore reported two Tweets related to a hip hop video. **One Tweet was withheld** arising from the notice from IMDA, marking the first content to be withheld in Singapore.

Turkey

Twitter received over 1,000 requests from Turkey under Article 8/A of Law 5651 during the Turkish military operations in Syria held in October 2019. **In addition to TOS actions, Twitter withheld 223 URLs** under Turkey's anti-terror law.

05. Un-withheld Content

Content is typically un-withheld (i.e., restored to Twitter) after a successful appeal of an original court order or because a legal procedure expired. Un-withheld content may pertain to accounts or Tweets that were withheld prior to this current reporting period.

We un-withheld content in India during this reporting period.

Examples (Lumen links to corresponding legal demands available below[4]):

India

We received a decree of mandatory injunction from the Honorable High Court of Delhi for the removal of offensive content concerning a well-known finance company in India. The court order directed Twitter to take down the Tweets. In compliance with the court order, Twitter withheld nine Tweets. Twitter later received a court order for the withdrawal of the lawsuit, therefore, all nine Tweets were unwithheld.

06. TOS Violations

This section includes instances where, in response to legal demands identifying the specified accounts or Tweets, content was removed from Twitter after determining it violated Twitter's TOS.[5] We review all reported content for violations of Twitter's TOS before assessing it further independent of any underlying claims.

We take an objective approach to reviewing legal demands for possible violations of Twitter's TOS. The fact that the reporters in these cases may be involved in litigation, or may be government / law enforcement officials, had no bearing on whether any action

Ireland

Twitter received a request from Irish law enforcement regarding content that violated a suppression order. **Two Tweets from two accounts were actioned** under our private information policy.

Peru

Twitter received a request from Peruvian law enforcement reporting identity theft. **The reported account was removed** due to a violation of our impersonation policy.

Turkey

Twitter received removal requests from Turkey for 30 URLs under Article 8/A of Law 5651 related to the footage of a murder. **All Tweets related to this footage were removed** for violations of our Sensitive Media Policy.

United Kingdom

Twitter received a request from a UK law firm reporting dozens of Tweets for sharing private information of their client without consent. **The account was suspended** for violating Twitter's private information policy.

07.

Majority no action

This section includes instances where, in response to a legal demand, no action was taken on the majority of the reported content, as most accounts / Tweets were determined not to violate Twitter's TOS or to merit withholding under CWC. Generally, we do not take action on newsworthy content or political speech protected under UN-recognized principles of free expression consistent with Twitter values.

Examples:

Colombia

We received 154 requests from the National Police of Colombia related to the civil protests in late 2019. Most of the content included political commentary about the existing government's social and economic policies. Thus, **no action was taken on the majority of the reported content.**

Indonesia

Twitter received five legal demands from Indonesian authorities reporting unusually large numbers of accounts in each request (42,550 accounts in total for the five requests). **Roughly 90% of the reported content was determined not to violate Twitter's TOS.**

Ireland

Twitter received a legal request reporting four Tweets that contained allegedly defamatory comments about an Irish politician. **No action was taken as the Tweets were determined to fall under Twitter's newsworthy content policy.**

Turkey

Twitter received 22 court orders to remove Tweets related to a rumor about a former naval officer. **No action was taken on the 104 reported Tweets** either because of the political nature of the content or because users had already deleted them. We objected to the court orders on grounds of freedom of expression.

Local Law(s)

Published on August 19, 2020

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04. German Network Enforcement Act

01. Latest Data: Local Law(s)

Bars | Table

July - December 2019

Removal requests	Percentage of Reports Actioned	Accounts specified	Accounts Withheld	Tweets Withheld
1.4K	26%	1.0K	0	57

Accounts (TOS)
317

02. Overview

This section includes reports based on local law(s) from trusted reporters and non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") identified by the European Commission.

There are also details about the latest trends in global volumes of requests, accounts specified, total compliance rate, accounts withheld, Tweets withheld, and accounts TOS.

Some notable changes since the last report:

Reports

+56%

Increase in **global reports based on local law(s)** compared to the last reporting period.

Compliance rate

+73%

Increase in **the global compliance rate** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts specified

+67%

Increase in **global accounts specified** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts withheld

No Change

No change in **global accounts withheld** compared to the last reporting period.

Tweets withheld

+43%

Increase in **global Tweets withheld** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts TOS

+282%

Increase in **global accounts TOS** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

All reported content is first reviewed for potential violations of Twitter's TOS. Any content that is found to be violating is removed from the platform. Content that does not violate Twitter's TOS is then reviewed for potential withholding based on the local law(s) of the reporting jurisdiction.

Trusted reporters and NGO's

Broadly speaking, the organizations that submitted reports to us work on protecting and furthering human rights, and preventing issues such as racism, xenophobia, or homophobia. Twitter has formed partnerships with trusted reporters from Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands to date. In addition, the European Commission designated a number of other European NGOs to assist in evaluating industry implementation of the Code of Conduct on countering illegal online hate speech.

Twitter received 56% more reports based on local law(s) from trusted reporters and NGOs, impacting approximately 55% more accounts during this reporting period.

Examples (Lumen links to corresponding legal demands available below[8]):

France

Twitter received a removal request from a Trusted Reporter, SOS Homophobie, regarding content reported for violating the law on the Freedom of the Press of 29 July 1881 of France. **The reported content was withheld in France** because it targeted someone with direct insults for being part of a protected category.

Germany

A trusted reporter **identified two Tweets** that shared a violent and graphic video. **One of the Tweets was removed** from the platform under our Glorification of Violence policy. The other Tweet, although it was sharing the same video, was not removed because it was being reported on by a journalist aiming to raise awareness and report on current affairs.

04. German Network Enforcement Act

The Network Enforcement Act (Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz, aka NEA) is a German law that came into effect on January 1, 2018. We're including information about it in this section of the transparency report as any content withheld under this law uses the same local law messaging as available in other countries.

Twitter is required to publish a biannual report in German regarding our handling of complaints submitted from users or complaints bodies pursuant to the law. The most recent report was published in January 2020, covering the reporting period of July 1 to December 31, 2019, and is available to download from the Germany country report.

During this reporting period, Twitter received several appeals regarding withholding actions taken under German NEA laws. The appeals were largely from one user, who was also a frequent reporter of content under the NEA. When re-evaluating the content, we decided some of it fell under our exceptions to NEA under the rights of freedom of press and expression, and therefore, reinstated it.

Footnotes

Some cases received during this reporting period may be in progress and may not be closed at the time of reporting.

Each request may identify multiple items to be removed. For example, a single request may ask us to remove individual Tweets, an entire account, or both.

We may not comply with every request or all aspects of a request for a variety of reasons. For example, we do not comply with requests that fail to identify content on Twitter.

Legal Demands

1. This section does **not** include reports submitted by government officials to review content solely under Twitter's TOS. More information about Twitter Rules enforcement is available here.

2. Court orders are often accompanied by a non-disclosure order that prevents Twitter for notifying a specified account holder.

Where permitted, Twitter has published copies of removal requests to Lumen, at times redacted, that have resulted in content being withheld. We try to redact as little information as possible. Redacted information usually consists of personally identifiable information, but may also include defamatory statements or information that we are prohibited from publishing.

3. Withheld Content corresponding legal demands Lumen links:

- Argentina
- Australia
- India
- Japan
- Singapore
- Turkey

4. Un-withheld Content corresponding legal demands Lumen links:

- India

5. "Twitter's TOS" is made up of Twitter's Terms of Service and the Twitter Rules. More information about Twitter Rules enforcement is available here.

Local Law(s)

6. Trusted reporters

- France
- Germany

Copyright Notices

About this report

Insights into Digital Millennium Copyright Act ("DMCA") takedown notices and counter-notices for content on Twitter and Periscope.

DMCA Takedown Notices

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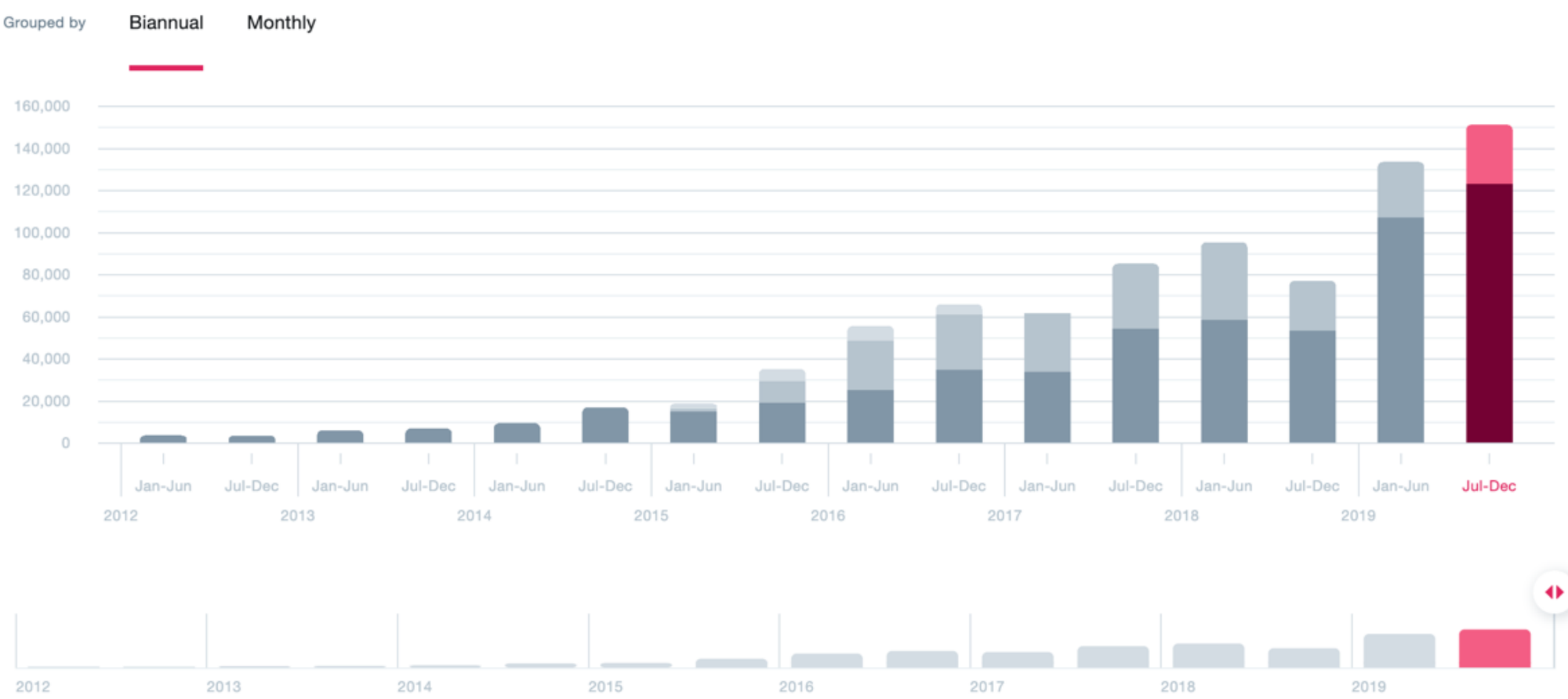
02. Overview
03. Analysis
04. Top Copyright Reporters

Published on August 19, 2020

01. Latest Data: DMCA Takedown Notices

Bars | Table

Grouped by Biannual Monthly



July - December 2019

Takedown notices	Compliance rate	Accounts affected	Media withheld	Tweets withheld
150.9K	54.6%	653.4K	824.6K	133.9K

02. Overview

This section covers the latest data about Digital Millennium Copyright Act ("DMCA") takedown notices to remove content on Periscope and Twitter.

There are also details about the latest trends in global volumes of requests, corresponding compliance rate, accounts affected, media withheld, and Tweets withheld, as well as insights into our related policies.

Takedown notices

+13%

Increase in **global takedown notices** compared to the last reporting period.

Compliance rate

+4%

Increase in **global compliance rate** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts affected

+163%

Increase in **global accounts affected** compared to the last reporting period.

Media withheld

+176%

Increase in **global media withheld** compared to the last reporting period.

Tweets withheld

+18%

Increase in **global Tweets withheld** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

Big picture

This report includes data on DMCA takedown notices submitted through our web form or otherwise sent to Twitter, such as via fax or mail. For more information, please see our Copyright Policy.

We received 13% more DMCA takedown notices affecting 163% more accounts during this reporting period.

We provide affected account holders with a copy of the related DMCA takedown notice when their media or Tweets are withheld. The notification includes instructions on how to file a counter-notice (in case they believed the content was removed in error) and also how to seek a retraction from the original reporter.

No action

We do not withhold content in response to DMCA takedown notices that are incomplete, do not concern copyright issues, or that we determine to be fraudulent. We carefully review each notice, and follow up with the reporter as appropriate. In addition, there may be certain uses of copyrighted material that do not require the copyright owner's permission, such as political speech, content that is potentially newsworthy, or cases of apparent fair use. This type of speech is protected under UN-recognized principles of free expression and may not violate Twitter's Copyright Policy.

The following are examples of copyright takedown notices we determined were invalid due to misrepresentations made by the reporter or because the requests were overreaching.

Recent examples:

Ecuador

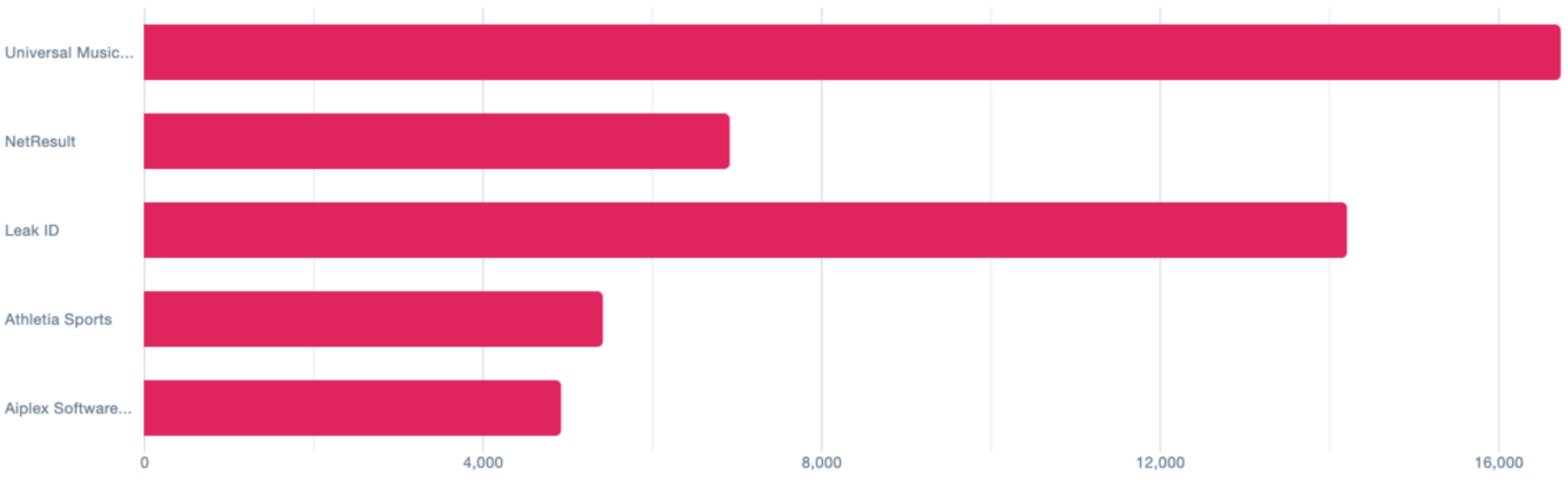
We received **471 DMCA takedown notices** from the Legal office of the Presidency of Ecuador reporting various Ecuadorian Twitter news accounts and individuals. **No action was taken on 75% of these notices** as the content did not violate Twitter's policies.

Kuwait

We **took no action on 77 DMCA takedown requests** filed by a prominent Kuwaiti blogger. The requests targeted accounts using the blogger's images for criticism and commentary. The content did not violate Twitter's policies.

04. Top Copyright Reporters

Bars | Table



July - December 2019

Takedown notices	% of all takedown notices	Materials withheld
48.2K	39.1%	444.0K

We receive copyright takedown notices from copyright owners or their authorized representatives. For this reporting period, the entities who have submitted the most takedown requests over the past six months include: Universal Music Group, LeakID, Net Result, Athletia Sports and Aiplex. Takedown notices from IFPI and Universal Music Group received the largest number of compliant counter notices, resulting in the content being restored to our services.

You can see these takedown notices, along with all the other actionable copyright notices we process, at Lumen.

DMCA Counter Notices

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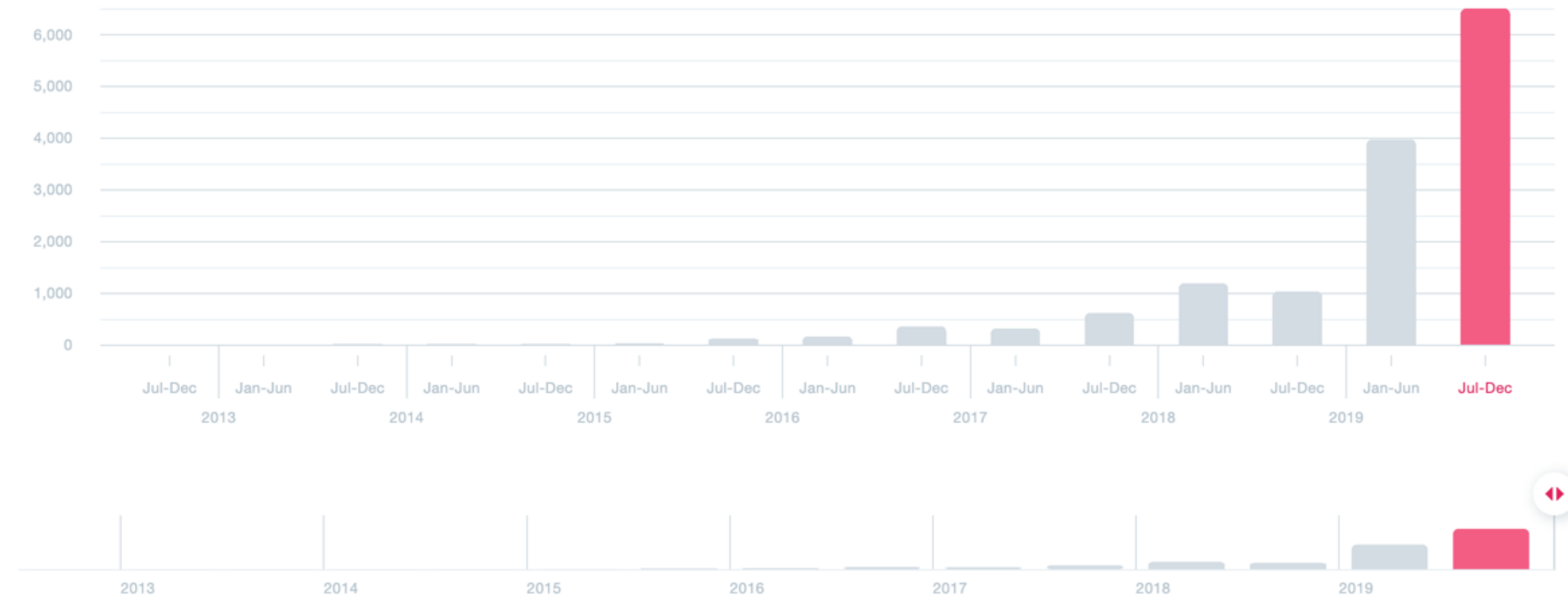
01. Latest Data: DMCA Counter Notices

Bars | Table

Grouped by: Biannual | Monthly



July - December 2019

Counter notices	Restoration rate	Media withheld	Tweets withheld
6.5K	100%	8.5K	1.1K

02. Overview

This section covers the latest data about DMCA counter notices to restore content on Periscope and Twitter.

There are also details about the latest trends in global volumes of requests, restoration rate, media affected, and Tweets affected.

Counter notices

+64%

Increase in **global counter notices** compared to the last reporting period.

Restoration rate

No change

No change in **global restoration rate** compared to the last reporting period.

Media withheld

+64%

Increase in **global media withheld** compared to the last reporting period.

Tweets withheld

+51%

Increase in **global Tweets withheld** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

Big picture

The DMCA provides statutory instructions on how an affected party can formally appeal a copyright removal by submitting a valid counter notice.

Footnotes

Some cases received during this reporting period may be in progress and may not be closed at the time of reporting.

Trademark Notices

About this report

Insights into reports and outcomes of alleged trademark policy violations on Twitter and Periscope.

Trademark Notices

Published on August 19, 2020

01. Latest Data

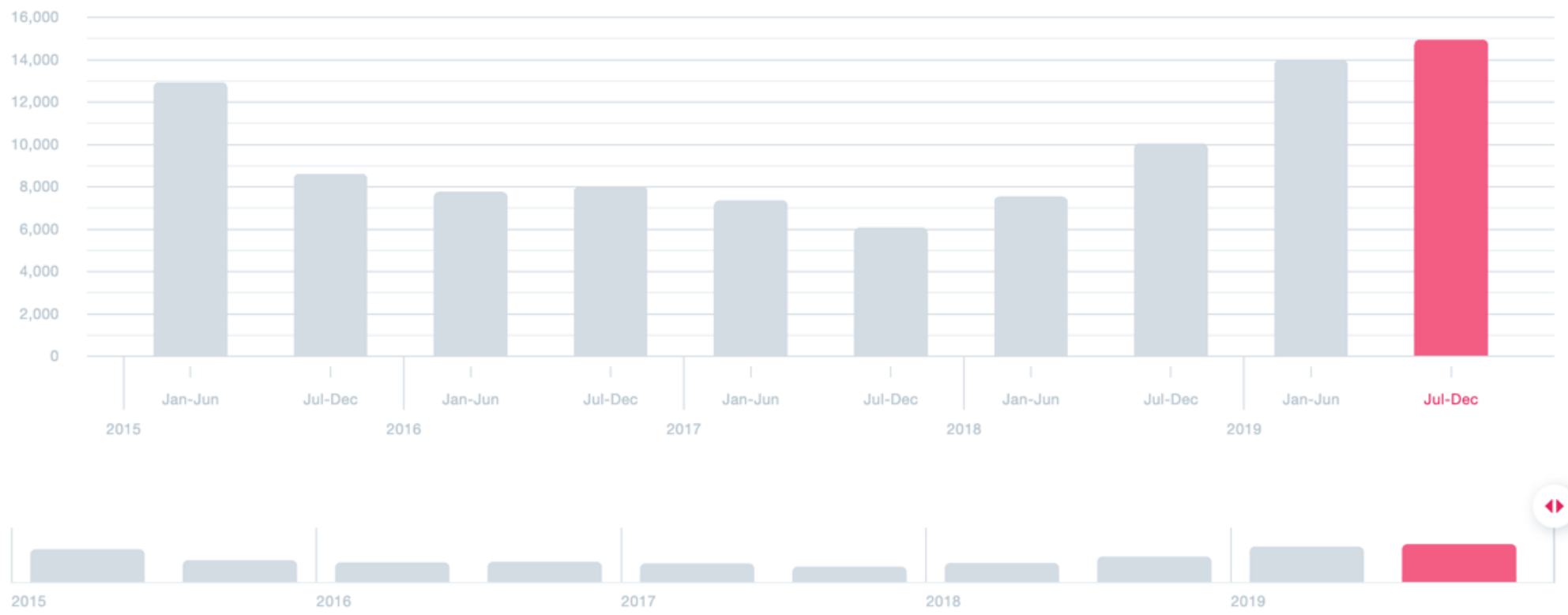
02. Overview

03. Analysis

01. Latest Data: Trademark Notices

Bars Table

Grouped by Biannual Monthly



July - December 2019

Trademark notices	Accounts affected	Percentage of accounts affected
14.9K	795	5.3%

02. Overview

This section covers the latest volume of trademark notices, accounts affected, and the corresponding compliance rates.

Twitter responds to reports of alleged trademark policy violations when we receive a complaint from the trademark owner or their authorized representative.

Some notable changes since the last report:

Trademark notices

+7%

Increase in **global trademark notices** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts affected

-4%

Decrease in **global accounts affected** compared to the last reporting period.

Compliance rate

-12%

Decrease in **global compliance rate** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

Big picture

Twitter received 7% more trademark notices, affecting 4% less accounts since our last report.[1]

Key factors

We carefully review each report received under our trademark policy, and follow up with the reporter as appropriate, such as in cases of apparent fair use. We may take action on reported content if it is using another's trademark in a manner that may mislead others about its business affiliation.[2]

Footnotes

Some cases received during this reporting period may be in progress and may not be closed at the time of reporting.

1. We may not take action on every request for a variety of reasons. For example, we may not take action on:

- Trademark notices filed by representatives who have not been authorized by the trademark owner.
- Trademark notices that fail to provide sufficient information for us to locate accounts or material on Twitter and Periscope.
- Misfiled, non-trademark complaints submitted through our Trademark web form.

2. Where an account is determined to violate Twitter's trademark policy, each account holder is given the opportunity to appeal an account suspension.

Rules Enforcement

About this report

Insights into how and when we enforce our policies, and reports of potential violations.

Accounts Actioned

01. Latest Data

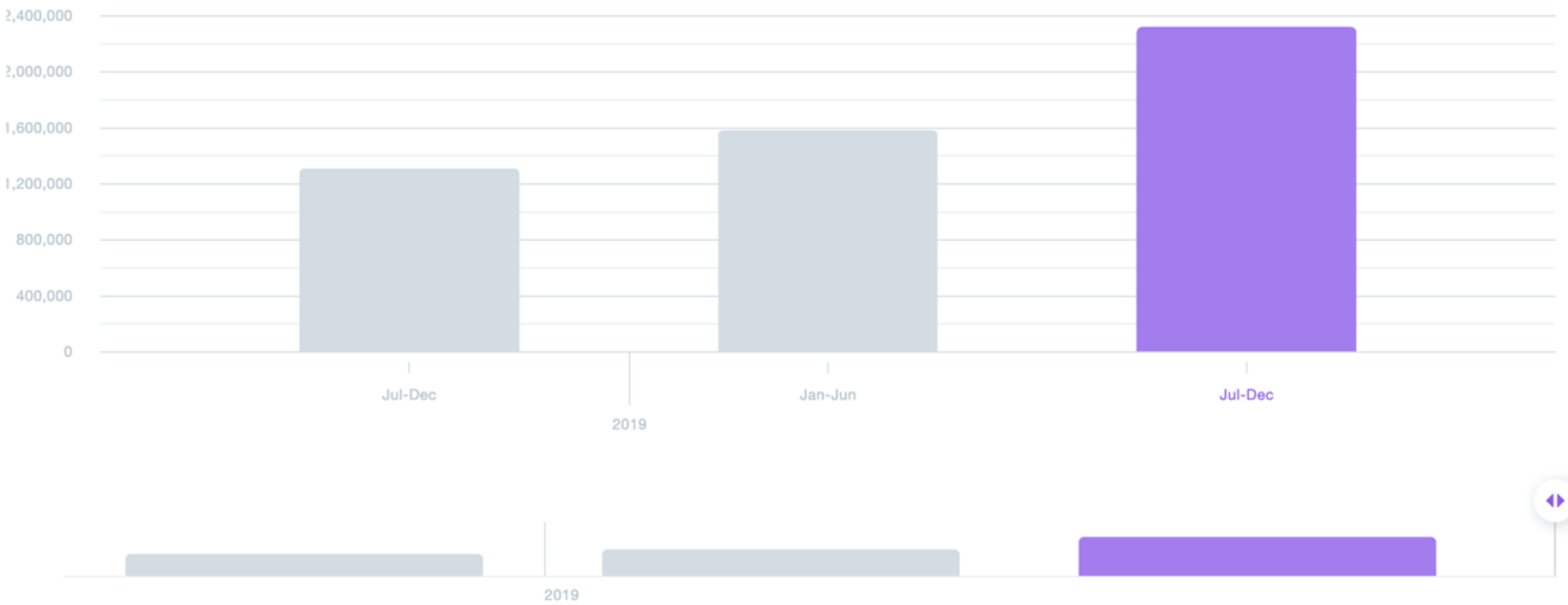
02. Overview

03. Analysis

Published on August 19, 2020

01. Latest Data: Accounts Actioned

Bars | Table



July - December 2019

Accounts actioned	Accounts suspended	Content removed
2.3M	872.9K	2.9M

02. Overview

Twitter's purpose is to serve the public conversation. We welcome people to share their unique point of view on Twitter, but there are some behaviors that discourage others from expressing themselves or place people at risk of harm. The Twitter Rules exist to help ensure that all people can participate in the public conversation freely and safely, and include specific policies that explain the types of content and behavior that are prohibited.

This section covers the latest data about instances where we've taken enforcement actions under the Twitter Rules to either require the removal of specific Tweets or to suspend accounts. These metrics are referred to as: accounts actioned, content removed, and accounts suspended. More details about our range of enforcement options are available in our Help Center.

Some notable changes since our last report:

Accounts actioned

+47%

Increase in **accounts actioned** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts suspended

+27%

Increase in **accounts suspended** compared to the last reporting period.

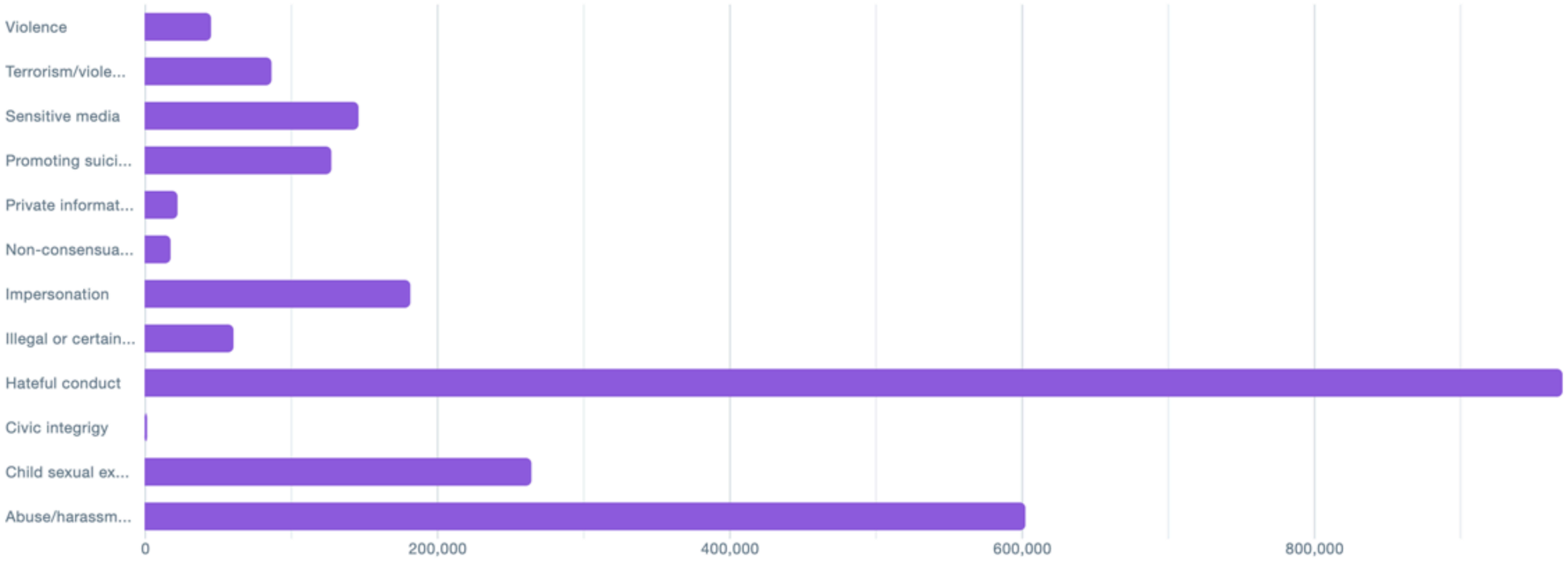
Content removed

+50%

Increase in **content removed** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

Bars | Table



July - December 2019

Accounts actioned
2.3M

Accounts suspended
872.9K

Content removed
2.9M

Big picture

We have restructured and expanded this section to better align with the Twitter Rules. We are now sharing more granular data on our actions for 12 distinct policy areas and have also updated our metrics for Report 14 (Jul - Dec 2018) and Report 15 (Jan - Jun 2019) to be consistent with this approach.

We have a global team that manages enforcement of our Rules with 24/7 coverage in every supported language on Twitter. Our goal is to apply the Twitter Rules objectively and consistently. Enforcement actions are taken on content that is determined to violate the Twitter Rules.

We support the spirit of the Santa Clara Principles on Transparency and Accountability in Content Moderation, and are committed to sharing more detailed information about how we enforce the Twitter Rules in future reports.

Safety

The "Safety" section of the Twitter Rules covers violence, terrorism/violent extremism, child sexual exploitation, abuse/harassment, hateful conduct, promoting suicide or self-harm, sensitive media (including graphic violence and adult content), and illegal or certain regulated goods or services. More information about each policy can be found in the Twitter Rules.

Some notable changes since the last report:

Violence

There was a **5% decrease** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our violence policies during this reporting period.

Terrorism/violent extremism

There was a **9% decrease** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our terrorism / violent extremism policy during this reporting period.

Child sexual exploitation

There was a **7% increase** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our child sexual exploitation policy during this reporting period.

Abuse/harassment

There was a **95% increase** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our abuse policy during this reporting period.

Hateful conduct

There was a **54% increase** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our hateful conduct policy during this reporting.

Promoting suicide or self-harm

There was a **29% increase** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our suicide or self-harm policy during this reporting period.

Sensitive media, including graphic violence and adult content

There was a **39% increase** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our sensitive media policy during this reporting period.

NEW: Illegal or certain regulated goods or services

There were **60,807** unique accounts actioned for violations of our illegal or certain regulated goods or services policy during this reporting period.

Other select takeaways:

Terrorism/violent extremism
The Twitter Rules prohibit the promotion of terrorism and violent extremism. Action was taken on 86,799 unique accounts under this policy during this reporting period. 74% of those accounts were proactively identified and actioned.

Child sexual exploitation
We do not tolerate child sexual exploitation on Twitter. When we are made aware of child sexual exploitation media, including links to images of or content promoting child exploitation, the material will be removed from the site without further notice and reported to The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children ("NCMEC"). People can report content that appears to violate the Twitter Rules regarding Child Sexual Exploitation via our web form or through in-app reporting.

257,768 unique accounts were suspended during this reporting period for violating Twitter policies prohibiting child sexual exploitation. 84% of those accounts were proactively identified and actioned.

Abuse/harassment
These policies saw the largest increase in the number of accounts actioned during this reporting period.

Hateful conduct
Hateful conduct expanded to include a new dehumanization policy on July 9, 2019.

Privacy

The "Privacy" section of the Twitter Rules covers private information and non-consensual nudity. More information about each policy can be found in the Twitter Rules.

Some notable changes since the last report:

Private information

There was a **41% increase** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our private information policy during this reporting period.

Non-consensual nudity

There was a **109% increase** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our non-consensual nudity policy during this reporting period.

Other select takeaways:

Private information
Internal tooling improvements allowed us to increase enforcement of this policy.

Non-consensual nudity
This reporting period saw the largest increase in the number of accounts actioned under this policy.

Authenticity

The "Authenticity" section of the Twitter Rules covers platform manipulation and spam, civic integrity, impersonation, synthetic and manipulated media, and copyright and trademark. We have standalone report pages for platform manipulation and spam, copyright, and trademark, and cover civic integrity and impersonation enforcement actions in this section.[1] More information about each policy can be found in the Twitter Rules.

Some notable changes since the last report:

Civic integrity

There was a **32% increase** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our civic integrity policy during this reporting period.

Impersonation

There was a **31% increase** in the number of accounts actioned for violations of our impersonation policy during this reporting period.

Accounts Reported

Published on August 19, 2020

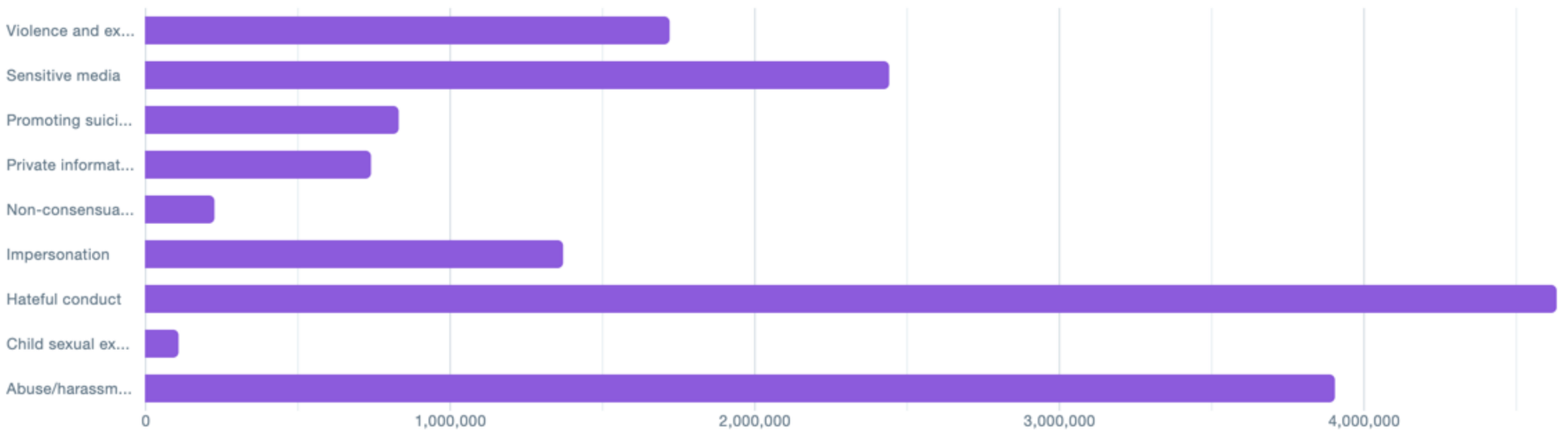
01. Latest Data

02. Overview

03. Analysis

01. Latest Data: Accounts Reported

Bars | Table



July - December 2019

Accounts

9.6M

02. Overview

Insights into accounts reported for violations of the Twitter Rules.

Accounts reported

+20%

Increase in **accounts reported** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

Big picture

We have expanded the scope of this section to cover nine distinct policy areas to better align with the Twitter Rules and to share more granular data on reports of potential violations.

Please note that the policy categories in this section do not map cleanly to the ones in the section above. This is because people typically report content for possible Twitter Rules violations through our Help Center or in-app reporting. Reported content is reviewed to determine whether it violates any aspects of the Twitter Rules, independent of its initial report category. For example, content reported under our private information policy may be found to violate – and be actioned under – our hateful conduct policies. We may also determine that reported content does not violate the Rules at all.

We support the spirit of the Santa Clara Principles on Transparency and Accountability in Content Moderation, and are committed to sharing more detailed information about how we enforce the Twitter Rules in future reports.

Footnotes

Accounts Actioned

To provide meaningful metrics, we de-duplicate accounts which were actioned multiple times for the same policy violation. This means that if we took action on a Tweet or account under multiple policies, the account would be counted separately under each policy. However, if we took action on a Tweet or account multiple times under the same policy (for example, we may have placed an account in read-only mode temporarily and then later also required media or profile edits on the basis of the same violation), the account would be counted once under the relevant policy.

1. Our synthetic and manipulated media policy launched in February 2020 and, as such, there is no enforcement data to share for this reporting period. We plan to include this information in future reports.

Accounts Reported

To provide meaningful metrics, we de-duplicate accounts which were reported multiple times (whether multiple users reported an account for the same potential violation, or whether multiple users reported the same account for different potential violations). For the purposes of these metrics, we similarly de-duplicate reports of specific Tweets. This means that even if we received reports about multiple Tweets by a single account, we only counted these reports towards the "accounts reported" metric once.

Platform Manipulation

About this report

Insights into the unauthorized use of Twitter to mislead others and/or disrupt their experience by engaging in bulk, aggressive, or deceptive activity.

Platform Manipulation

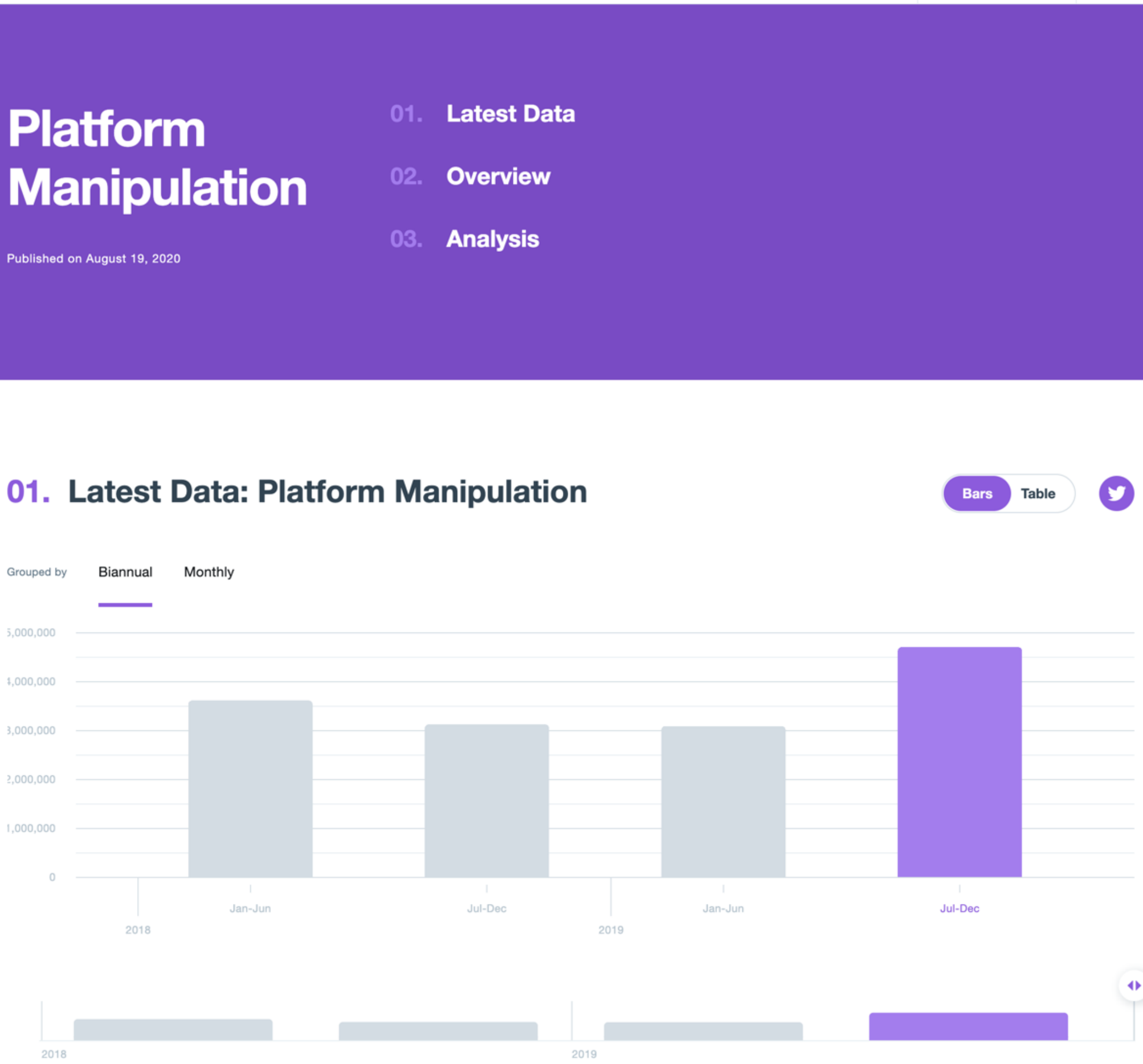
01. Latest Data
02. Overview
03. Analysis

Published on August 19, 2020

01. Latest Data: Platform Manipulation

Bars Table

Grouped by Biannual Monthly



July - December 2019

Reports	Challenges
4.7M	88.0M

02
Overview

Platform manipulation refers to the unauthorized use of Twitter to mislead others and/or disrupt their experience by engaging in bulk, aggressive, or deceptive activity. This prohibited activity includes, but is not limited to, spam, malicious automation (malicious use of bots), and inauthentic account abuse (fake accounts).

This report reflects both the volume of anti-spam challenges issued to Twitter accounts each month, and the number of reports of spam submitted by people on Twitter.

Some notable changes since the last report:

Anti-spam challenges

-9%

Decrease in **global anti-spam challenges** compared to the last reporting period.

Spam reports

+52%

Increase in **global spam reports** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

Big picture

Platform manipulation and spam can include the following behaviors:

- Commercial spam — Persistent, often automated content which puts uninvited information in front of you. The spammer tries to get you to do something you wouldn't otherwise do, such as click a link, buy something, or give up personal information.
- Artificial amplification — Actions to make an account or concept seem more popular or controversial than it actually is, through inauthentic engagements (e.g. followers, mentions, Likes, or Retweets).
- Coordinated activity — Efforts to artificially influence conversations through the use of multiple and/or fake accounts.
- Combination of any of the above — Spammers may attempt to take advantage of a popular topic in order to sell something, or ideologically-motivated actors may use spammy amplification tactics to attempt to reach more people.

For more information about how we define these behaviors, please see our Platform Manipulation and Spam policy.

Anti-spam challenges

One way we fight manipulation and spam at scale is to use anti-spam challenges to confirm whether an authentic account holder is in control of accounts engaged in suspicious activity. For example, we may require the account holder to verify a phone number or email address, or to complete a reCAPTCHA test. These challenges are simple for authentic account owners to solve, but difficult (or costly) for spammers to complete. Accounts which fail to complete a challenge within a specified period of time may be suspended.

Anti-spam challenges issued to suspected spam accounts dropped by about 9% as compared to the previous reporting period. As we've previously stated, actions taken related to spam tend to fluctuate for a variety of reasons, such as the total number of attempted Twitter signups for the same time period, as well as the volume of spam campaigns targeting our service at any point in time.

Spam reports

For the time period of July-December 2019, we saw a substantial increase in the number of spam reports from people who use Twitter: the total number for the 6-month period has increased by 52% from the number we reported in our most recent Transparency Report. While spam-fighting is adversarial in nature, and numbers can fluctuate significantly, people who use Twitter are telling us they're experiencing more spam, so we're devoting increased multi-disciplinary attention to the problem across teams at Twitter.

It's important to remember that a report doesn't always correlate with a violation of our rules. Twitter is what's happening, and it's the place people go to engage in passionate discussion about sensitive world events — which can lead to heated discussions. In these situations, we sometimes see people filing spam reports as a way to raise concerns about content they don't like or disagree with, reporting them as "fake." This isn't to say that people who report spam on Twitter aren't experiencing unwanted interactions; however, those interactions may not necessarily represent violations of the Twitter Rules, and are one of numerous factors that contribute to the growing number of spam reports following interactions. We also sometimes see people calling on others to report an account as spam believing that a large volume of reports will trigger a response - this is not the case, but does lead to higher volumes of reports.

Informaiton Operations

About this report

Insights into attempts to manipulate Twitter by state-backed entities.

Information Operations

01. Overview
02. FAQs
03. Download Archive
04. Unhashed Releases

01. Overview

In line with our principles of transparency and to improve public understanding of inauthentic influence campaigns, Twitter is making publicly available archives of Tweets and media that we believe resulted from state-backed information operations on our service.

We believe Twitter has a responsibility to protect the integrity of the public conversation — including through the timely disclosure of information about attempts to manipulate Twitter to influence elections and other civic conversations by foreign or domestic state-backed entities. We believe the public and research community are better informed by transparency.

In October 2018, we launched the first archive in the industry of potential foreign information operations we have seen on Twitter. It is our fundamental belief that these accounts should be made public and searchable so members of the public, governments, and researchers can investigate, learn, and build media literacy capacities for the future.

Transparency has been a critical part of this company from the start. We expanded this dataset considerably with several separate updates over the past couple of years — we're the only company to offer this level of granularity and transparency.

For our part, we are learning, evolving, and building a technological and personnel-driven approach to combating inauthentic influence campaigns. We hope that holistic, transparent disclosures such as this can help us all learn and build the necessary societal defenses and capacities to protect public conversation.

June 2020

Twitter published a dataset of **32,242 accounts**, attributed to state backed information operations originating from **China, Russia, and Turkey**.

Blog post >

April 2020

Twitter published a dataset of **20,348 accounts**, attributed to state backed information operations originating from **Serbia, Honduras, Egypt, Indonesia, and a KSA affiliated actor**.

Tweet thread >

March 2020

Twitter published a dataset of **70 accounts**, attributed to state backed information operations originating from **Ghana/Nigeria**.

Tweet thread >

December 2019

Twitter published a dataset of **5,929 accounts**, attributed to state backed information operations originating from **Saudi Arabia**.

Blog post >

September 2019

Twitter published a dataset of **10,104 accounts**, attributed to state backed information operations originating from **UAE & Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Ecuador, and China**.

Blog post >

August 2019

Twitter published a dataset of **936 accounts**, attributed to state backed information operations originating from **China**.

Blog post >

June 2019

Twitter published a dataset of **4,943 accounts**, attributed to state backed information operations originating from **Iran, Russia, Spain, and Venezuela**.

Blog post >

January 2019

Twitter published a dataset of **4,711 accounts**, attributed to state backed information operations originating from **Bangladesh, Russia, Iran, and multiple datasets from Venezuela**.

Blog post >

October 2018

Twitter published a dataset of **4,383 accounts**, attributed to state backed information operations originating from **Russia and Iran**.

Blog post >

02. FAQs

What will you release in the future?

If and when we identify additional attempted information operations on Twitter in the future, our first priority is to enforce our rules and remove accounts engaged in attempts to manipulate the public conversation. Following these enforcements, we carry out thorough investigations of the accounts and individuals involved. We only disclose datasets once we have determined attribution, and once all applicable investigations have concluded. We may also release incremental additions to existing datasets if we believe the additional information could materially impact research findings.

What's included?

Platform manipulation that we can reliably attribute to a government or state-backed actor is considered an information operation and is prohibited by the Twitter Rules.

These datasets are of a size that a degree of capability for large dataset analysis is required. You can download the datasets below. While no content has been redacted, some account-specific information has been hashed to protect account privacy.

These datasets include profile information, Tweets and media (e.g., images and videos) from accounts we believe are connected to state-backed information operations. Tweets and media which were deleted are not included in the datasets. Note that not all of the accounts we identified as connected to these campaigns actively Tweeted, so the number of accounts represented in the datasets may be less than the total number of accounts attributed to the information operation and enforced against.

Why hash some of the information?

For accounts with fewer than 5,000 followers, we have hashed certain identifying fields (such as user ID and screen name) in the publicly-available version of the datasets. While we've taken every possible precaution to ensure there are no false positives in these datasets, we've hashed these fields to reduce the potential negative impact on authentic or compromised accounts — while still enabling longitudinal research, network analysis, and assessment of the underlying content created by these accounts.

Specialist researchers can apply below for research access to an unhashed version of these datasets. Access to the unhashed version is governed by a data license agreement limiting usage of the unhashed datasets to research purposes, with provisions to ensure the researcher may only use the data in a limited manner and with appropriate security measures in place.

What can I do if I believe I've been included here in error?

If you believe your account has been included in error, please log into your account and file a suspension appeal here. We carefully review these cases, and will help restore potentially compromised accounts, or accounts that may have been included in error, to their owners.

Email Security

About this report

Our email communications to our users are an important link to hundreds of millions of recipients who use Twitter regularly.

Email Security

01. Latest Data

02. Overview

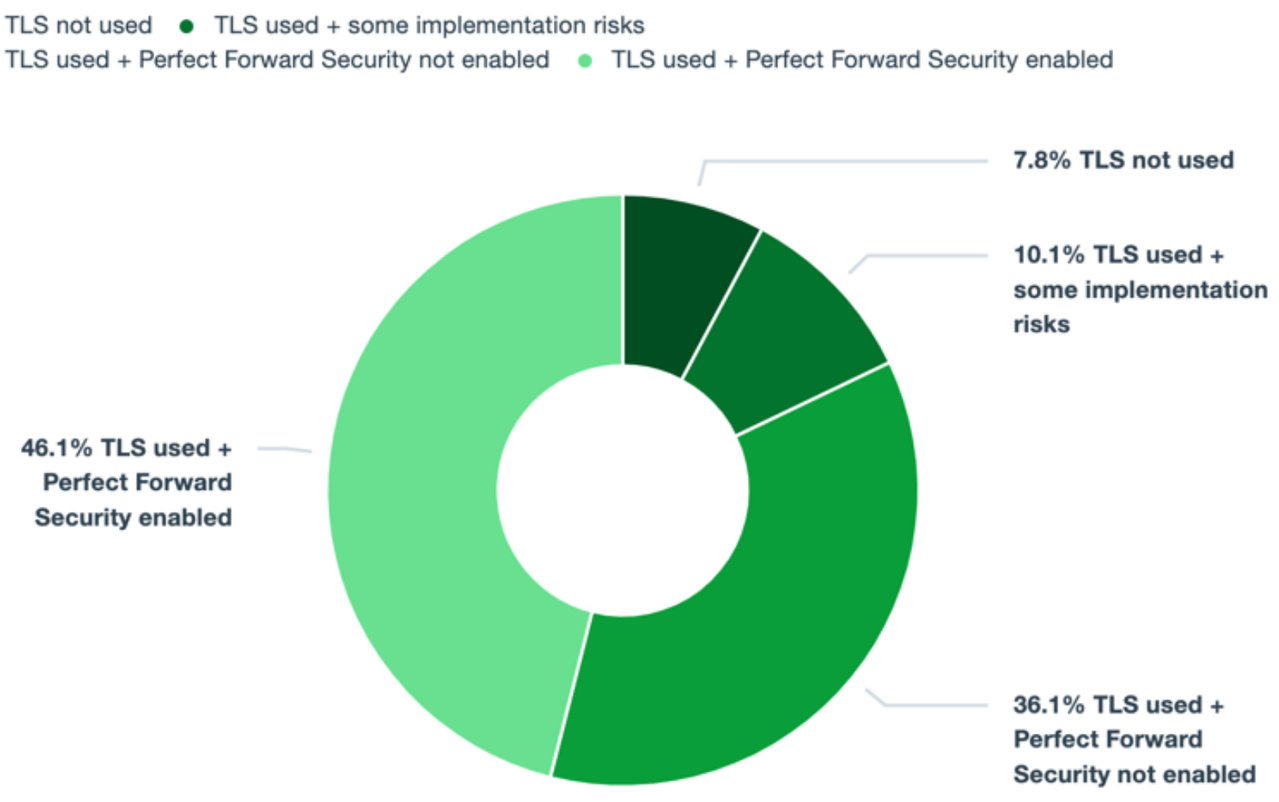
03. Top Domains

01. Latest Data

Security

Pie

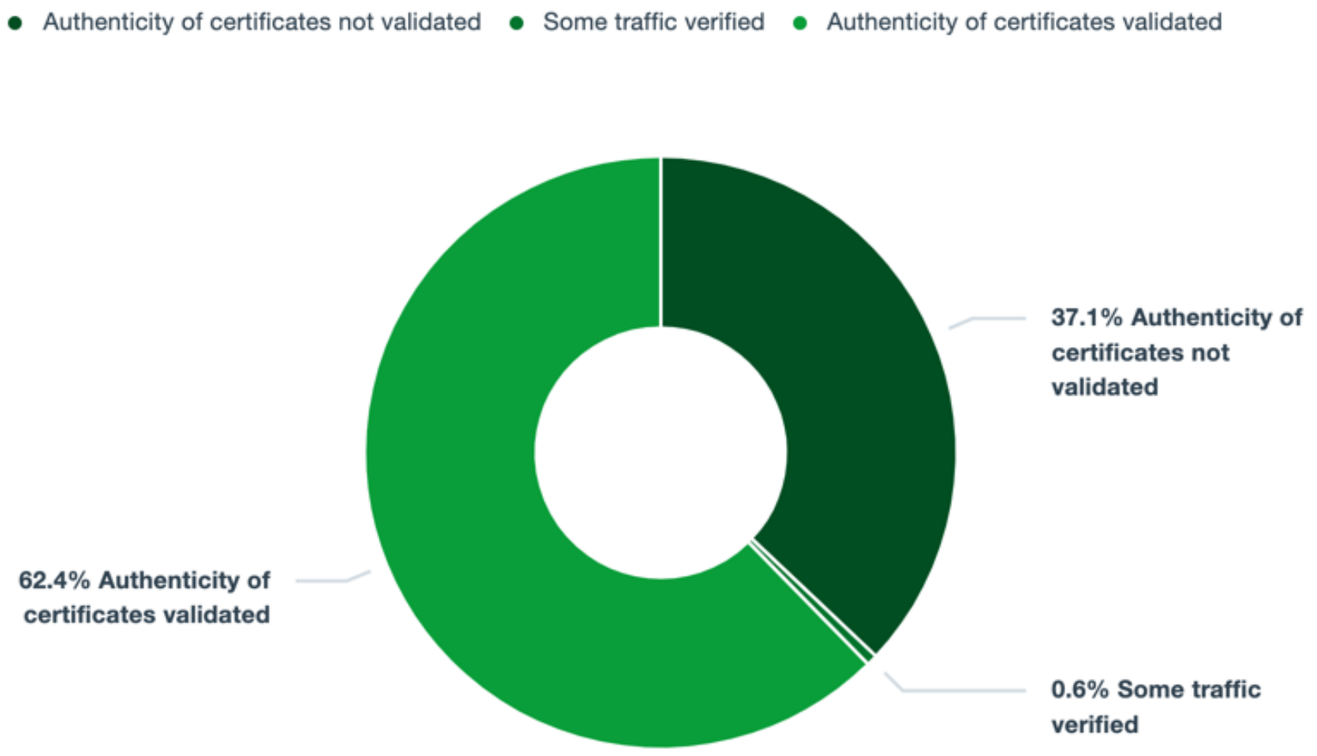
Last 24 hours



Verified

Pie

Last 24 hours



02. Overview

As part of our commitment to the security of our users, Twitter has enabled a number of email security protocols over the years. Since early 2013, Twitter has supported the security controls Sender Policy Framework (SPF), DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM), and Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance (DMARC) with a reject policy to combat phishing and fraudulent email.

In 2014, we began using StartTLS, which encrypts both outbound and inbound emails in transit. Assuming your email provider supports TLS, it also ensures that emails you receive from Twitter have not been read by other parties on the way to your inbox.

We compiled this high-level overview of different providers' email privacy practices as a way to provide greater transparency and insight to our users around how and when email security protocols are being used.

03. Top Domains

List by: Top domains

Filter by domain...

Download CSV

Domain	Security	Verified	% Encrypted
⊞ gmail.com	●	●	100%
⊞ hotmail.com	●	●	100%
⊞ yahoo.com	●	●	100%
⊞ icloud.com	●	●	100%
⊞ yahoo.co.jp	✖	○	0%

⊞ outlook.com	●	●	100%
⊞ aol.com	●	●	100%
⊞ qq.com	●	●	100%
⊞ live.com	●	●	100%
⊞ comcast.net	●	●	100%

1 2 3 4 ›

Results per page

Glossary

Domain

Domain: The name of the ISP.

Ciphers: The types of encyrption used by that domain.

Protocols: The versions of TLS (if any) employed in the transmission of the message.

Algorithm bits: The strength of the encryption itself in bit form, e.g., 128-bit vs. 64-bit encryption.

Verification: The percentage of traffic from a domain that is verified versus unverified.

Volume: A logarithmic measure of the relative volume of traffic for the domain.

Security

Security: How does the ISP use the TLS?

✖ TLS is not used.

○ TLS is used, but there are some implementation risks.

◒ TLS is used, but Perfect Forward Secrecy is not enabled.

● TLS is used and Perfect Forward Secrecy is enabled.

Verified

Verified: Could the authenticity of the certificate used in securing the channel be validated?

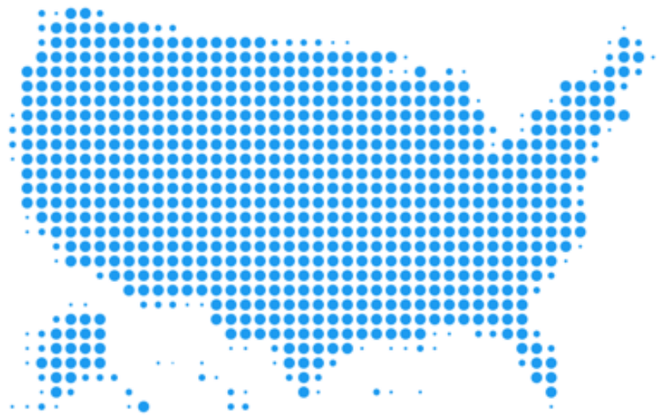
○ Authenticity of the ISP's certificate could not be validated.

◒ Some, but not all email traffic, could be verified.

● Authenticity of the certificates used for all email communication were validated.

% Encrypted: Could the authenticity of the certificate used in securing the channel be validated?

United States



About this report

Insights into information requests and removal requests originating from the United States.

Information Requests

Published on August 19, 2020

01. Latest Data
02. Overview
03. Analysis
04. Breakdown by Location
05. Types of Legal Process
06. User Notice
07. National Security Requests

01. Latest Data: Information Requests

Map | Bars | Table

U.S. (50 states/territories)

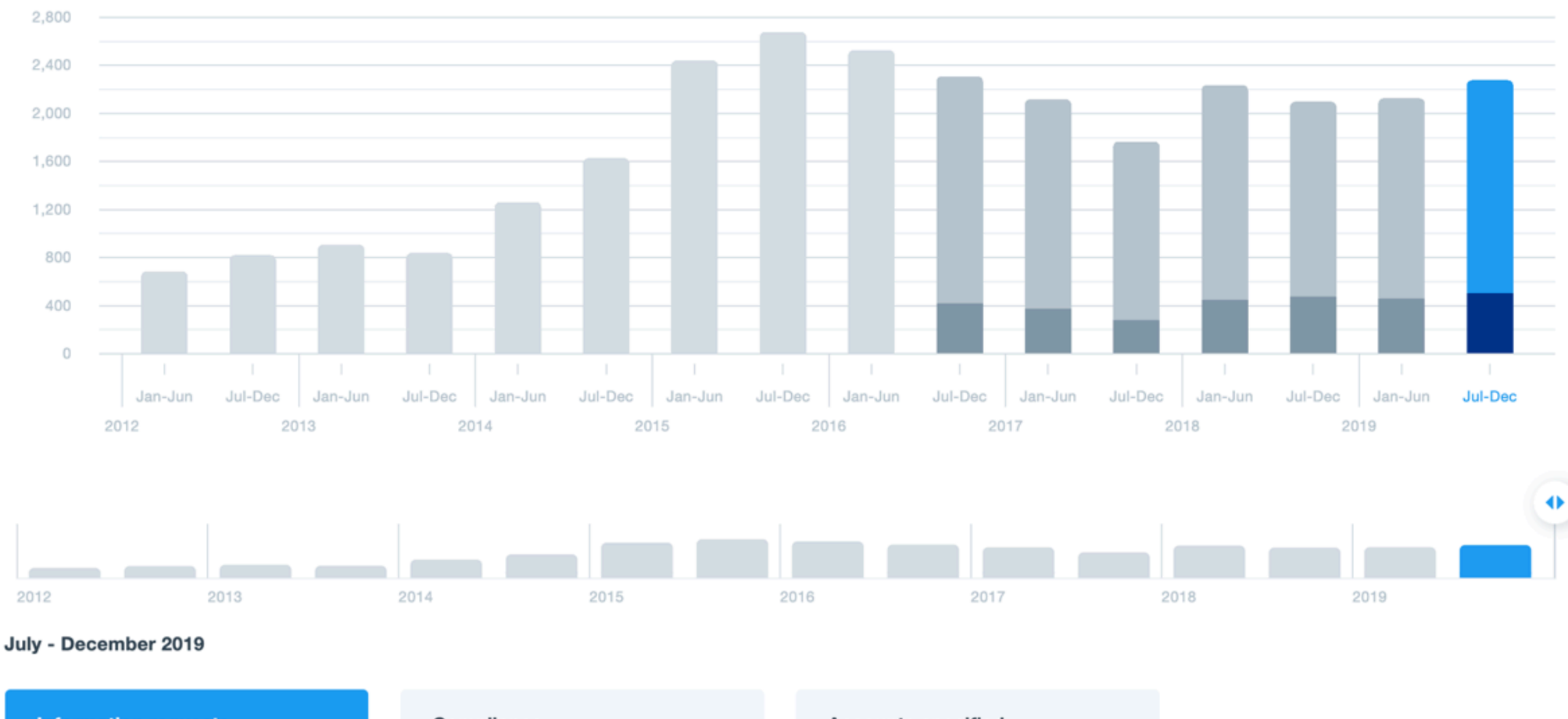
0 | 1 - 32 | 33 - 129 | 130 - 334

July - December 2019

Information requests	% Compliance	Accounts specified
2.3K	62%	8.9K

01. Latest Data: Information Requests

Map | **Bars** | Table



July - December 2019

Information requests	Compliance	Accounts specified
2.3K	**62.1%**	**9.0K**

02. Overview

This data includes the number of government information requests, accounts specified, and the corresponding compliance rate for these requests originating from the United States. We also include a high-level breakdown of requests based on the U.S. state or territory they originated from (below). For more information about emergency requests and non-government requests, visit the Information Requests report.[1]

Information requests

+7%

Increase in **U.S. government information requests** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts specified

+116%

Increase in **U.S. government accounts specified** compared to the last reporting period.[2]

Compliance rate

-11%

Decrease in the **U.S. government compliance rate** compared to the last reporting period.

03. Analysis

Government information requests originating from the U.S. continue to make up the highest percentage among requesting countries from around the world. This has been the case since we began reporting on information requests in 2012.[3]

26% of all global requests for account information originated from the United States during this reporting period. These requests accounted for 44% of all accounts specified from around the world. Twitter complied, in whole or in part, with 62% of these U.S. information requests.

User privacy

Twitter generally requires a search warrant to disclose any contents of communications, since users have the greatest privacy interest in this type of information.

However, Twitter may disclose content in the U.S. without receiving a search warrant in rare circumstances, in accordance with applicable law. For example, if there is an emergency involving an imminent threat of death or serious bodily harm, in response to certain national security requests, or with the account-holder's lawful consent. Twitter also reports child sexual exploitation content to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) as required by U.S. law and in accordance with our zero tolerance policy.

CalECPA

Twitter also furthers our commitment to user privacy with our support for and interpretation of CalECPA, a California state law which went into effect at the beginning of 2016. CalECPA sets a higher bar for California state government entities to obtain certain user data than the floor established by federal statute, Electronic Communications Privacy Act. As a result, California state law enforcement and government entities must obtain a warrant based on probable cause to compel a provider like Twitter to disclose IP addresses, which would also generally be available with a subpoena or court order under federal law.[4]

During this reporting period, Twitter received 209 subpoenas and court orders issued by state and local government entities outside of California which sought IP addresses, compared to 217 such requests in the prior reporting period. In 47 of the 209 matters during this reporting period, requesters either withdrew their request entirely, withdrew their request for IP addresses, or properly domesticated their request in California as a result of our approach to CalECPA.

04. Breakdown by Location

Twitter receives government information requests from federal, state, and local authorities. The following table outlines the distribution of these requests, which are attributed to a particular state based on the location of the requesting office.

Twitter received the greatest percentage of requests from Washington, D.C., New York, California, and Texas during this reporting period.

Top Requesting Agencies

The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), and the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) submitted the greatest percentage of requests during this reporting period. The FBI, DOJ, and USSS have also consistently submitted the greatest percentage of requests for the six previous reporting periods.

Federal vs state requesters

Table

Search for a state

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State	Federal Requests	State Requests
Total	1,640	631
Alabama	5	5
Arizona	9	10
Arkansas	5	2
California	185	76
Colorado	19	2
Connecticut	4	1
Delaware	2	0

County insights

This section highlights the top requesting counties in the ten states that have submitted the most state government information requests during this reporting period. We classify the county of the requester based on the address of the requesting office.

We include this level of detail to offer additional insight into the frequency that local authorities seek user data and to help identify any possible related trends over time.

California

Since we have begun reporting at the county level, Los Angeles County has been the top requester, submitting **41% of total California state information requests** during this reporting period.

Florida

Miami-Dade County was again the top requester, submitting **19% of total Florida state information requests** in this reporting period.

Illinois

DuPage County was the top county requester, submitting **38% of total Illinois state information requests** during this reporting period.

Maryland

Montgomery County was the top county requester, submitting **24% of total Maryland state information requests** during this reporting period.

New Jersey

Monmouth County was the top county requester, submitting **20% of total New Jersey state information requests** during this reporting period.

New York

New York County was again the top requester, submitting **65% of total New York state information requests** during this reporting period.

Ohio

Cuyahoga County was the top county requester, submitting **21% of total Ohio state information requests** during this reporting period.

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia County was the top requester, submitting **40% of total Pennsylvania state information requests** during this reporting period.

Texas

Harris County was the top requester, submitting **21% of total Texas state information requests** during this reporting period.

Virginia

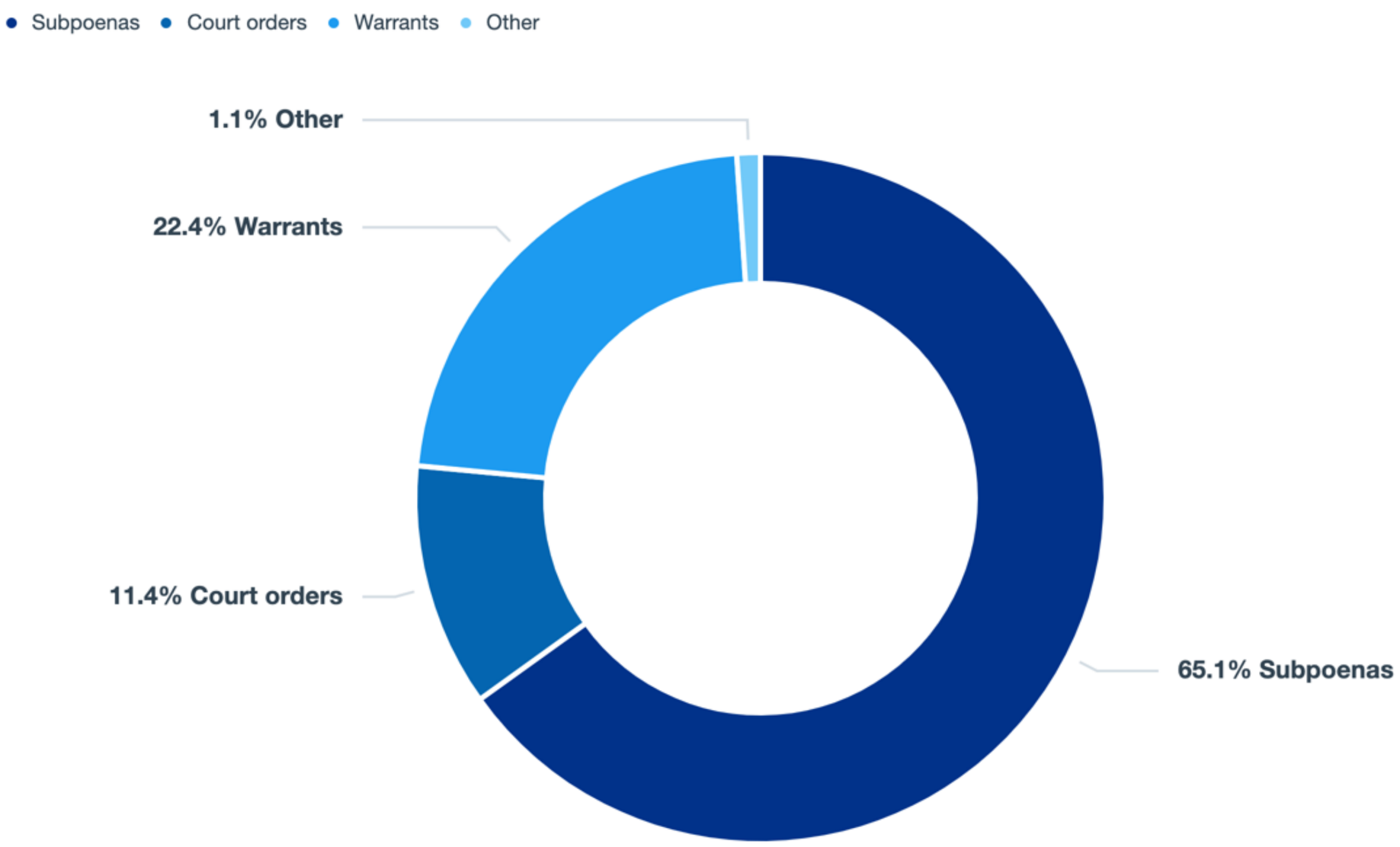
Fairfax County was the top requester, submitting **33% of total Virginia state information requests** during this reporting period.

05. Types of Legal Process

Pie | Bars | Table

Types of legal process

July - December 2019



Subpoenas

Subpoenas are the most common form of legal process issued under the Stored Communications Act. They do not generally require judicial review and usually seek basic subscriber information, such as the email address associated with an account and IP logs. However, as noted above, Twitter may require a search warrant from state law enforcement to disclose IP addresses, in accordance with CalECPA.

Court orders

Unlike subpoenas, court orders do require judicial review, and must be issued by an appropriate judge. The law enforcement or government entity applying for an order must make a greater showing than is required for a subpoena, and may request transactional information (i.e., the non-content portion of communications such as the "from," "to," and "date" fields of DMs) with federal “2703(d) court orders” or state law equivalents. While Twitter mostly receives “2703(d) orders,” more information about other types of court orders received is available below.

Search warrants

As proscribed by the Fourth Amendment, warrants typically require the most judicial scrutiny before they are issued. To obtain a search warrant, the government must demonstrate to an independent judge or magistrate that there is probable cause to believe that certain evidence will be found in the location identified. The government has to meet the greatest burden before the judge will issue this type of legal process, and warrants must be particularized to the specific facts of the case. A valid warrant is required for Twitter to disclose the contents of communications (e.g., Tweet content, DM content, Periscope broadcasts).

Other

Requests from law enforcement that do not fall in any of the above categories. Examples include emergency disclosure requests and other requests for account information without valid legal process.[5]

Certain types of court orders

Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty Requests

Mutual legal assistance treaty (MLAT) requests may authorize district courts within the United States to order Twitter to produce account information for use in a proceeding in a foreign or international tribunal, including criminal investigations.[6]

Twitter may receive U.S. requests for information on behalf of foreign governments based on other forms of cross-jurisdictional assistance. For example, requests may be issued pursuant to letters rogatory, or under mutual legal assistance agreements with countries that have not yet been officially brought into force through an actual treaty. Additionally, MLAT requests may be issued under multilateral treaties which the U.S. has signed and ratified, like the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance of the Organization of American States, the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, or the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

> 2019: July 1 - Dec 31: **4%** of court orders and **1.5%** of search warrants received have been explicitly identified as having been issued as a result of MLAT requests, which originated in Argentina, Armenia*, Australia, Canada, Dominican Republic*, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Poland.
>
> *First time we identified an MLAT request originating from this country.

Pen Register / Trap & Trace Orders

Pen register/trap and trace (“PRTT”) orders authorize the government to obtain prospective metadata of communications for the account specified for up to 60 days. This means that Twitter would be required to disclose data on an ongoing basis that did not yet exist at the time the order was signed. PRTT orders may require Twitter to disclose IP address records and transactional information (i.e., the non-content portion of communications such as the "from," "to," and "date" fields). Twitter is prohibited from notifying affected users about the existence of PRTT orders until otherwise authorized by the court, pursuant to the PRTT statute.[7]

> 2019: July 1 - Dec 31: **7%** of court orders received by Twitter were PRTT orders.

Wiretap Orders

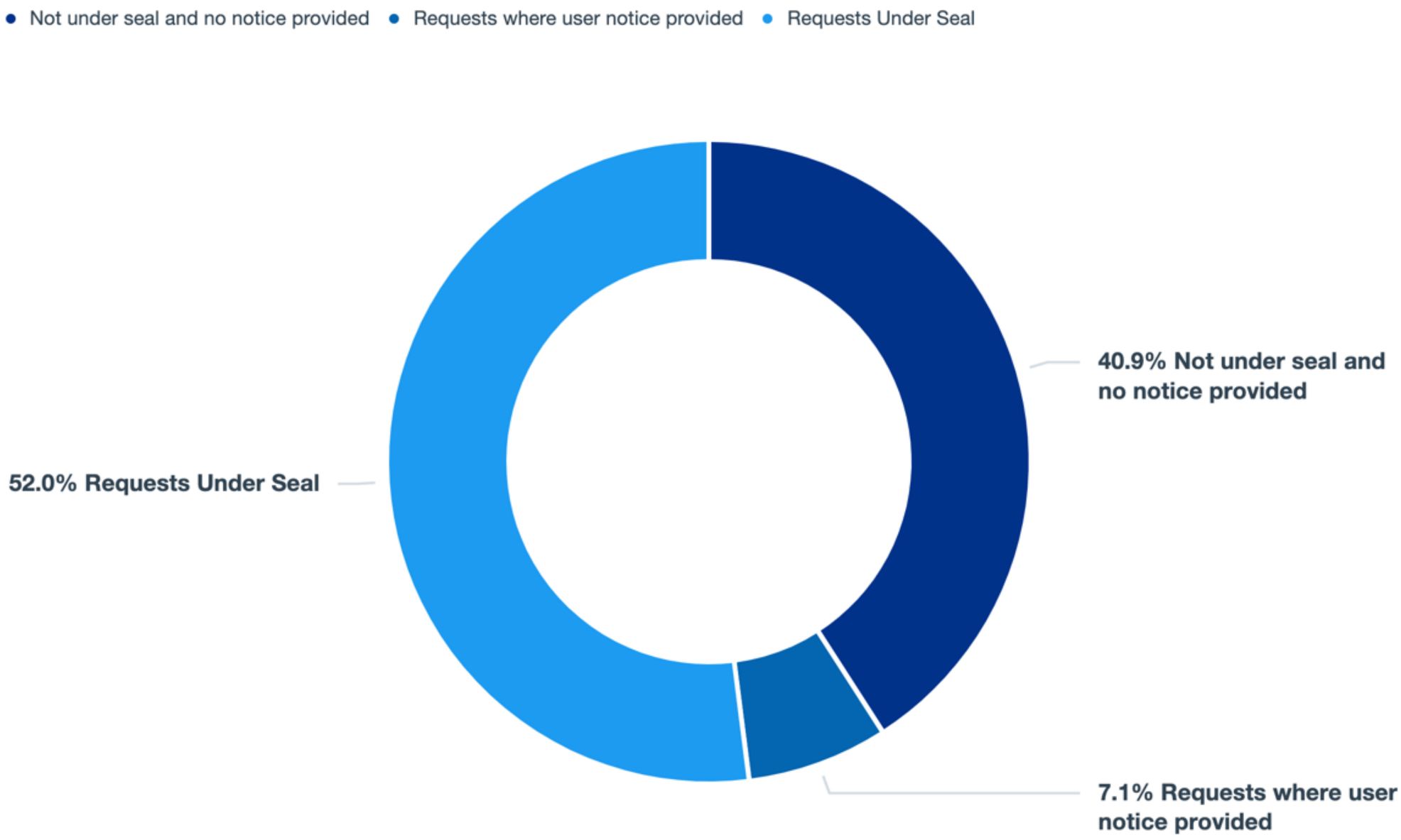
Wiretap orders authorize the government to obtain prospective metadata and contents of communications for the specified account for up to 30 days. **To date, Twitter has not received a valid criminal wiretap order.** Twitter has received orders purporteldy requiring such real-time surveillance, but these orders were not issued in compliance with the requirements of the Wiretap Act and therefore Twitter did not comply with the wiretap request. These orders nonetheless may meet legal requirements for other types of disclosures and are therefore reflected in our figures accordingly. Like PRTT orders, wiretap orders are issued under seal and Twitter would therefore generally be prohibited from notifying affected users of the existence of such an order until otherwise ordered by the court.

06. User Notice

Pie | Bars | Table

User notice

July - December 2019



Twitter has a longstanding policy of notifying affected account holders of requests to disclose their account information unless prohibited or on the basis of an applicable exception as outlined in our Guidelines for Law Enforcement and legal request FAQs.

Twitter sent notice to affected account holders prior to disclosure where there was no accompanying non-disclosure order, or other reasons not to provide notice.[8]

However, requests for account information are often accompanied by a binding non-disclosure order, which legally prohibits Twitter from notifying account holders of the underlying legal request.

Some non-disclosure orders do not include an explicit date when the confidentiality obligation expires. Twitter regularly seeks an amended order with specified duration for the non-disclosure requirement (e.g., 90 days) when we receive this type of indefinite order.

07. National Security Requests

U.S. National Security Letters

Table

Search for a year

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Year received	Government initiated Review	Provider requested Review
Total	8	10
2019	0	0
2018	1	0
2017	0	0
2016	2	0
2015	5	1
2014	0	0
2013	0	0

As in past reports, Twitter is only able to publish very limited information about national security requests, due to legal prohibitions that we continue to challenge in court (see below for an update on Twitter v. Barr, our ongoing transparency litigation).

At this time we are able to share information about the number of National Security Letters ("NSLs") received which are no longer subject to non-disclosure orders ("NDOs"). NDOs on NSLs are lifted in one of two different ways, government initiated review or provider requested review.

During this reporting period we notified users affected by one additional NSL after the gag order was lifted. As reflected in the table above, non-disclosure orders for 18 total NSLs have been lifted to date.[9] We believe it is much more meaningful to publish these actual numbers than reporting in the bands authorized per the USA Freedom Act. (These reporting limits are not applicable for national security process, which are no longer subject to non-disclosure requirements, such as these NSLs.)

Twitter is committed to continuing to use the legal mechanism available to us to request judicial review of these gag orders. More broadly, we are also committed to arguing that indefinite non-disclosure orders are unconstitutional in both the criminal and national security contexts. We view each request for judicial review as an opportunity to strengthen the legal precedent protecting our First Amendment rights.

Twitter v. Barr

As in past reports, Twitter is not reporting on any other national security process we may have received because of limitations imposed on us by the U.S. government. We continue to litigate this issue in our case Twitter v. Barr. On April 17, 2020 the Court granted the government's motion for summary judgment and dismissed Twitter's lawsuit. Twitter filed a notice of appeal of that decision on June 15, 2020.

We will continue to fight for meaningful transparency through this and other efforts, and look forward to sharing more updates here as they become available.

Removal Requests

01. Latest Data

02. Overview

Published on August 19, 2020

01. Latest Data: Removal Requests

Bars | Table

Report date : From 2012-01-01 To 2019-12-01 **Select a Report**

January 2012 - December 2019

Removal requests	Percentage of Reports Actioned	Accounts specified	Accounts Withheld	Tweets Withheld
1.1K	30.6%	2.4K	0	0

Accounts (TOS)
1.4K

02. Overview

This data includes the number of United States government (and other complaints of illegal content from authorized reporters) legal demands received to remove or withhold content, the number of accounts specified in these requests, and the compliance rate (either withheld or removed for violating the Twitter Rules). For more detailed information, read the Removal Requests report.

Legal demands

-48%

Decrease in **U.S. legal demands** compared to the last reporting period.

NEW: Compliance rate

31%

This reporting period introduced the **U.S. compliance rate** metric. This new simplified metric combines all of Twitter's removal actions—accounts withheld, Tweets withheld, and accounts TOS.

Accounts specified

-86%

Decrease in **U.S. accounts specified** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts withheld

No change

No change **U.S. accounts withheld** compared to the last reporting period.

Tweets withheld

No change

No change **U.S. Tweets withheld** compared to the last reporting period.

Accounts TOS

-94%

Decrease in **U.S. accounts TOS** compared to the last reporting period.

Footnotes

Some cases received during this reporting period may be in progress and may not be closed at the time of reporting.

Information Requests

Some cases received during this reporting period may be in progress and may not be closed at the time of reporting.

1. Information requests include both federal and state legal process. Requests are attributed to a particular state based on the location of the requesting office.

The data above does not include national security requests. Please refer to the "National security requests" section below for additional information on the national security letters we are now legally permitted to convey, and an update on the Twitter v. Barr (f.k.a. Twitter v. Lynch and Twitter v. Sessions) lawsuit and our commitment to fighting for greater transparency in national security request reporting.

2. Twitter received 151 (+7%) more requests from the United States, while the number of accounts specified increased by 4,820 (+116%) during this reporting period. This number of users is skewed by a single request for a large number of users which Twitter publicly disclosed as associated with a state-backed information operation.

3. Twitter, Inc.'s global headquarters is located in San Francisco, California, USA.

4. As a California-based company, Twitter generally requires state and local government entities outside of California to properly domesticate a request for IP addresses in California state court. As a result, Twitter generally will not disclose IP addresses to state/local government entities outside of California without a subpoena or court order, and a broader set of Twitter users benefit from the protections of CalECPA.

5. All Writs Act Orders - The All Writs Act is a U.S. law from 1789 which authorizes a court to issue an order which is "necessary or appropriate in aid of their respective jurisdictions and agreeable to the usages and principles of law". The government invoked this apparent authority in the context of litigation with Apple. To date, Twitter has not received an order issued pursuant to this authority.

6. Previously, we included a comprehensive list of the number of requests that were confirmed to have been made via MLAT procedures for all previous reports. We have updated our reporting layout to only include the MLAT data for the current report. To view historical data, please navigate to previous U.S. reports through the dropdown menu at the top of the page.

7. Previously, we included a running list of the percentage of PRTT orders received for all previous reports. We have updated our reporting layout to only include the PRTT order data for the current report. To view historical data, please navigate to previous U.S. reports through the dropdown menu at the top of the page.

8. Twitter generally does not notify users if no data was disclosed in response to the request (i.e. the request was withdrawn by the requester prior to disclosure or the request was defective).

Other exceptions to Twitter's user notice policy include emergency disclosure requests, requests related to child sexual exploitation or terrorism, or other circumstances where notice would be counterproductive.

9. These numbers would not reflect NSLs for which Twitter requested judicial review but a court determined there is an ongoing non-disclosure obligation at the time of this publication.

Removal Requests

Some cases received during this reporting period may be in progress and may not be closed at the time of reporting.

Each request may identify multiple items to be removed. For example, a single request may ask us to remove individual Tweets, an entire account, or both.

We may not comply with every request or all aspects of a request for a variety of reasons. For example, we do not comply with requests that fail to identify content on Twitter.

'Tweets withheld' refers to Tweets that have been withheld at the individual Tweet level, and does not count the total number of individual Tweets from the 'Accounts withheld' column.