

## Yahoo Threatened To Comply With NSA



AFP Photo / Justin Sullivan

The US government threatened to fine Yahoo 250k a day, for not complying with NSA demands for PRISM data.

Ron Bell, Yahoo's general counsel, said in a blog post, that the company 'refused to comply with what we viewed as unconstitutional and overbroad surveillance and challenged the US Government's authority.'

The PRISM electronic data mining program was first exposed by former NSA contractor and whistleblower Edward Snowden. Almost all the major US tech firms were listed as participants in the program.

The details of Yahoo's attempt to resist joining the program come as a federal court judge unsealed 1,500 pages on Thursday related to a case the company filed with the Federal Intelligence Service Court (FISA), which provides legal authority in surveillance requests. Yahoo eventually lost the case on appeals.



AFP Photo / Justin Sullivan

But despite the partial declassification, some of the documents remain sealed, 'unknown even to our team,' Bell said. 'The released documents underscore how we had to fight every step of the way to challenge the US Government's surveillance efforts.'

'At one point, the US Government threatened the imposition of \$250,000 in fines per day if we refused to comply,' Bell wrote.

'A decision to open FISC or FISC-R records to the public is extremely rare, ' he added in his blog. 'Now that the FISC-R has

agreed to unseal the proceedings at our request, we are working to make these documents available.?

Yahoo's general counsel said the pages will be made available on its blog page.

?We consider this an important win for transparency, and hope that these records help promote informed discussion about the relationship between privacy, due process, and intelligence gathering,? said Bell.

In 2007, the US government amended the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, including a loophole in section 702, which led to the NSA being able to demand American user information from online services ? emails, chat conversations, voice calls, documents and more. AOL, Apple, Google and Microsoft complied with government requests.

Disclosures about the PRISM program, which was reportedly discontinued in 2011, prompted an international backlash over allegations of overreach in government surveillance and against the tech companies which cooperated with it.

Patrick Toomey, the American Civil Liberties Union's staff attorney, told the Guardian he had not yet reviewed all the documents but that it appeared Yahoo ?had challenged the warrantless wiretapping program more than any other of its competitors.?

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