

Subject: RE: Questions Concerning Disclosure of Telecommunications Information to Government Authorities

From: Privacy Manager - To: Christopher Parsons - Date: March 3, 2014 at 5:37 PM

Dear Mr. Parsons,

Thank you for your message.

To begin, Bell Aliant has always been committed to respecting the privacy of its customers' information, and remains committed to limiting disclosure only to the circumstances permitted by PIPEDA and otherwise required by law.

Transparency about privacy practices is a principle of fundamental importance and Bell Aliant makes information about its general practices available in its privacy policy and online privacy pages. At the same time, when it comes to disclosures to law enforcement and lawful government requests for information, there are other important principles at play, including the confidentiality of investigation techniques and protection of national security concerns. These principles must be weighed with respect to the current request.

Private companies like ISPs and communications companies are not in a good position to balance these competing interests. When these requests are made to government bodies, access-to-information principles exist to strike the right balance, and a well-understood system exists to challenge any decisions made. Requests to private companies do not have the advantage of this process for balancing competing interests in the information.

Accordingly, while we support the principle of transparency, our conclusion is that this particular request would be better directed to the various government bodies involved, who are bound by access-to-information laws and can engage in the proper balancing. As per normal practice when it comes to responding to public sector access-to-information requests, Bell Aliant will commit to working with any government body to evaluate such a request, as appropriate.

Sincerely,

Bell Aliant Privacy Office

From: Christopher Parsons [mailto:christopher@christopher-parsons.com]
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 9:53 PM
To: Privacy Manager
Subject: Questions Concerning Disclosure of Telecommunications Information to Government Authorities

Dear Privacy Officer,

My name is Christopher Parsons, and I'm Postdoctoral Fellow in the Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto. Earlier today I mailed a letter to your company that contains a series of questions concerning how, when, under what conditions, and how often your company discloses telecommunications information to government authorities. The letter is signed by leading academics and civil rights organizations from across Canada, all of whom have interests and expertise in government access to telecommunications data.

I wanted to both notify you that the physical letter had been sent and to also provide you with a digital copy of the letter to facilitate your own internal discussions about the questions that we ask. If you have any questions, or would like to otherwise contact me about the questions contained in the letter, please feel free to contact me at Christopher@Christopher-Parsons.com.

Best Regards,

Christopher Parsons

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Christopher Parsons
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Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs
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