

TekSavvy Solutions Inc. Quarterly Transparency Report

Reporting period: January 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021

Published October 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this report from TekSavvy is to provide insight into our disclosure practices by detailing how often we receive and respond to government agencies' requests for the personal information of our end users.

This edition of our Transparency Report contains information about requests that we received between January 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021. As of the date when this report was published, at least six months have passed since we received or responded to each of those requests.

This issue of TekSavvy's Transparency Report falls within the covid19 pandemic. To the best of our knowledge, during this reporting period TekSavvy did not receive any requests for information related to the covid19 public health emergency. If we were to receive such a request, we would handle it the same way we handle other requests for information described in this report.

The Government of Canada has endorsed the development and issuance of transparency reports. Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) has subsequently developed [Transparency Reporting Guidelines](#). Although we have adopted most of those Guidelines, we have decided to deviate in respect of how we present the data.

Specifically, ISED suggested enumerating requests only when the number of requests exceed 100; anything below 100 is suggested to be represented by a range of 0-100. While that threshold may make sense for larger telecommunications companies, TekSavvy is still relatively small. We do not receive hundreds of requests from government agencies therefore enumerating requests in a manner consistent with ISED's Guidelines would not provide the level of transparency that we aim to achieve.



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Overview

In total, between January 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021, TekSavvy received 58 requests for information from government agencies. TekSavvy provided the requested information in response to 38 of those requests which represents a response rate of 66%.

In this report, the total number of requests for information from government agencies has been broken down into two main categories: by authority and by jurisdiction.

“Authority” indicates whether or not the government agency making the request has done so in accordance with the law. We have broken down the data by authority to include four different subcategories: at the initiative of the organization, informal, court ordered, and emergency (sometimes called “exigent”).

“Jurisdiction” indicates what level of government the requests came from. We have broken down the data by jurisdiction to include three subcategories: provincial (which includes municipal), federal, and non-Canadian.

The data contained in each subcategory is enumerated by the number of requests of each type we received, the number of those requests that we disclosed information in response to, and the number of requests we rejected during the relevant reporting period.

Following the table below, we examine our disclosure policies and practices to provide an in-depth explanation of the data.

By Authority					
	Type of Request	Number of Requests	Number of Disclosures	No Relevant Information	Number Rejected
1	Court Ordered	35	33	2	0
2	Exigent or Emergency	6	5	1	0
3	Informal	~16	0	n/a	All (~16)
4	Administrative	1	0	1	0
5	TekSavvy’s initiative	n/a	1	n/a	n/a

By Jurisdiction					
	Type of Request	Number of Requests	Number of Disclosures	No Relevant Information	Number Rejected
6	Provincial Government Agencies	29	15	2	12
7	Federal Government Agencies	29	23	2	4
8	Foreign Government Agencies	0	0	0	0
		Total: 58	Total: 38	Total: 4	Total: 16

Requests Received, by Authority

1) Court Ordered Requests

**Of the requests received during this reporting period,
35 were court ordered requests.
TekSavvy provided the requested information
in response to 33 of those requests.**

This category describes any requests for information from government agencies made pursuant to a court order. The most common kind of court orders received by TekSavvy during the relevant period were “Production Orders” pursuant to section 487.014 of the *Criminal Code*.

The disclosure percentage in this particular subcategory is high at 86.8% because TekSavvy is legally required to comply with court orders. This is true insofar as the court order is compliant with the relevant legislation and is not overreaching or overbroad.

In the event that we are served with a court order that omits required information, is formatted incorrectly, is overreaching, or overbroad, we make our best attempts to work with the agency requesting the information to appropriately address any issues. However, we may reject the request if we are unable to reach a mutual understanding. During the relevant period, we did not reject any Production Orders for these reasons.

In some cases, TekSavvy may not have information responsive to court orders. This is most often the case when the law enforcement agency provides an IP address that was in use by a TekSavvy customer, but for which TekSavvy does not have logs, most likely because the requested time period was so long ago that we deleted those logs before we received the request or order.

TekSavvy Policy

TekSavvy only retains information that correlates a subscriber with an electronic address (IP address) for a period of 30 days after that IP address is no longer associated with that specific subscriber. Some of our Transparency Reports indicate that we did not provide the requested information for all of the court orders we received, which is generally because we no longer had any information that was responsive to some of those orders.

2) Emergency (Exigent) Requests

Of the requests received during this reporting period, 6 were requests for information in relation to exigent or emergency circumstances.

TekSavvy provided the requested information in response to 5 of those requests.

This category includes all requests made in relation to “*an emergency that threatens the life, health or security of an individual*” as set out in subsection 7(3)(e) of *PIPEDA* which allows organizations such as TekSavvy to disclose a subscriber’s personal information without their knowledge or consent.

TekSavvy Policy

Before disclosing information in response to an exigent or emergency request, TekSavvy requires the agency making the request to answer a series of questions intended to establish the urgency of the request and the importance of the requested information. This approach ensures compliance with subsection 7(3)(e) of PIPEDA before we disclose the requested information.

For additional information regarding how TekSavvy responds to requests made in emergency or exigent circumstances, please refer to our [Law Enforcement Guide](#).

3) Informal Requests

Of the 58 requests received during this reporting period, approximately 16 were informal requests. TekSavvy did not provide any information in response to those requests.

Informal requests are requests that lack legal authority. This means that the agency making the request is not doing so under any law – they are simply asking for us to voluntarily provide them with the requested information.

The most common kind of informal request received by TekSavvy during the relevant period were “jurisdiction requests”. A jurisdiction request is a document prepared by a law enforcement agent that is intended to gather information about the location of an end user, but not their identity. Jurisdiction requests are not court orders and because we are not required to disclose information in the absence of a court order, our policy is not to disclose information in response to jurisdiction requests.

Note that it is difficult for us to know the exact number of informal requests received during the relevant period. We say that we received “approximately” that many informal requests because these requests sometimes also come in the form of a phone call or email which are comparatively difficult for TekSavvy’s Data Protection Office to log and track.

TekSavvy Policy

While Canada’s private sector privacy law (PIPEDA) may allow organizations to voluntarily disclose the personal information of its subscribers in certain circumstances, TekSavvy only makes voluntary disclosures in emergency circumstances.

After disclosure of a subscriber’s personal information has been made to a government agency, we notify the individual of the disclosure unless, of course, we are prohibited from doing so by law.

4) **Administrative Requests**

Of the 58 requests received during this reporting period, 1 request for information was an “administrative request”. TekSavvy did not have relevant information in response to this request.

This category describes any requests for information about TekSavvy’s customers made by government agencies exercising their administrative powers. Administrative powers are, broadly speaking, powers that are created by law and exercised by government agencies or government officials, ranging from tax audits to the issuance of licences and permits.

5) **Disclosures Made at the Initiative of the Organization**

During this reporting period, TekSavvy performed 1 disclosure to government agencies at our own initiative.

This category is used to describe any disclosures TekSavvy made proactively. We only make voluntary disclosures if TekSavvy becomes aware of a real and imminent threat to someone’s wellbeing or when we are required by law to make such a disclosure. These kinds of circumstances do not arise often. When they do, they typically result from one of our agents overhearing physical violence during a phone interaction with our customers.

TekSavvy Policy

We record all of our phone conversations with our customers, within the technical constraints of our systems. These recordings are retained for a period of two years to assist in the resolution of service-related or billing disputes.

Requests Received, by Jurisdiction

6) Provincial & Municipal Government Agencies

Of the requests received during this reporting period, 29 were requests for information from provincial government agencies. TekSavvy provided the requested information in response to 15 of those requests.

The number of requests that resulted in a disclosure in this particular category represent a 52% disclosure rate. This disclosure rate can be partially attributed to the fact that most “jurisdiction requests” received come from municipal or provincial government agencies. As previously mentioned, we do not make disclosures in response to jurisdiction requests.

7) Federal Government Agencies

Of the requests received during this reporting period, 29 were requests for information from federal government agencies. TekSavvy provided the requested information in response to 23 requests.

Federal agencies have met with TekSavvy to discuss practices on both sides that respect investigative needs while protecting subscriber privacy. As a result, their requests typically result in disclosures if we have relevant information, which is reflected in the higher rate of disclosure in response to these requests.

8) Non-Canadian Government Agencies

Of the requests received during this reporting period, there were no requests for information from non-Canadian agencies.

Ordinarily, TekSavvy rejects requests from foreign agencies, treating them similarly to informal requests. Non-Canadian law enforcement agencies are directed to work with a Canadian law enforcement agency.

TekSavvy Policy

It is TekSavvy’s policy not to disclose subscriber information unless we are required to do so. Non-Canadian government agencies do not have authority to directly require us to disclose information to them. Instead, they must work with a Canadian law enforcement agency to request or order us to disclose information.

Types of Information Requested

The ISED Transparency Reporting Guidelines previously referred to in this report suggest breaking down requests by types of information sought. There were 5 suggested categories: basic identifying information, tracking data, transmission data, stored data and real-time interception.

Basic identifying information is any personal identifier and may include data points such as a subscriber's name, service address, billing address, telephone number or email address. All of the 58 requests received during the period of January 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021 requested basic identifying information.

Tracking data is defined by ISED as data that relates to the location of a transaction, individual or thing. Within this meaning of tracking data, all of the requests received during the relevant period were for tracking data.

Transmission data may include the MAC address of a cable Internet modem, the login of a DSL modem and any other modem identifiers such as the make, model, and serial number of the device. Of the 58 requests for information received during the relevant period, 6 included a request for transmission data.

Stored data is any information that is collected and then kept for any period of time. All of the requests received during the relevant period were for stored data.

Real-time interception occurs when communications are intercepted as they occur, typically through the means of a wiretap. To date, TekSavvy has not been asked to take part in the real-time interception of its subscribers' communications.

For an in depth explanation of what types of information TekSavvy collects and retains about its subscribers, and for more information about our privacy practices, please refer to our [Privacy Policy](#), and our [Privacy FAQs](#), our [Law Enforcement Guide](#), and [our response](#) to CitizenLab's 2017 request for information about our privacy and transparency practices.