AT&T, INC.

Telecommunications Company

Key Findings:

• AT&T tied with Vodafone as the top-ranked telecommunications company in the 2017 Index.

• AT&T had notably weaker disclosure of policies related to network management and network shutdowns in comparison to Vodafone.

• While AT&T received top marks for disclosing how it secures user information, it should be more transparent about what user information it collects, shares, and retains.

OVERALL SCORE

48%

TELECOMMUNICATIONS RANK

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SERVICES EVALUATED

• Pre-Paid Mobile
• Post-Paid Mobile
• Fixed-Line Broadband

ANALYSIS

AT&T tied with Vodafone as the top-ranked telecommunications company of the 2017 Index.¹ A member of the Telecommunications Industry Dialogue (TID), AT&T made notable improvements in 2016, including conducting a human rights impact assessment of its operations in Mexico, and clarifying of its process for handling private requests for content and account restrictions and user information. Notably, AT&T made strong commitments to freedom of expression and privacy as human rights at the corporate level. However, it had weaker disclosure of actual policies that affect users’ freedom of expression and privacy in practice—as demonstrated by its higher scores in the Governance category as compared to its performance in other Index categories. Nonetheless, AT&T disclosed more about its policies and practices that affect users’ freedom of expression and privacy than all other telecommunications companies evaluated, apart from Vodafone. However, new information about Hemisphere, a warrantless surveillance tool created by AT&T and marketed to U.S. law enforcement, raises questions about the company’s commitment to users’ privacy in practice.²

About AT&T, Inc.

AT&T, Inc. provides telecommunications services in the United States and internationally. In 2015, the company expanded its operations to Mexico after purchasing two Mexican telecommunications companies. The company offers data and voice services to approximately 144 million wireless subscribers in the U.S. and Mexico.³

Market Cap: USD 254,032 million⁴
NYSE: T
Domicile: United States
Website: www.att.com

¹ For AT&T’s performance in the 2015 Index, see: https://rankingdigitalrights.org/index2015/companies/att
AT&T was the highest-scoring telecommunications company in the Privacy category.

**Handling of user information:** AT&T disclosed more than all other telecommunications companies apart from Vodafone about how it handles user information (P3-P8). Still, it did not fully disclose what types of user information it collects (P3), shares (P4), or why (P5). The company revealed even less information about how long it retains this information (P6), although it was the only telecommunications company to score any points on this indicator. AT&T had a similar level of disclosure as Vodafone on how users can control what information about them is collected and shared (P7) but lagged behind Vodafone on disclosure of users’ ability to obtain all of the information a company holds on them (P8).

**Requests for user information:** AT&T received the highest score of all telecommunications companies for its disclosure of its process for responding to and complying with government and private requests for user information (P10, P11). AT&T did not indicate whether it notifies users about requests for their information (P12).

**Security:** AT&T disclosed more than all telecommunications companies about its security policies and was the only one of its peers to receive full credit for disclosure about its internal processes for ensuring that user data is secure (P13). AT&T was also one of only three companies in the entire Index to reveal any information about how it handles data breaches, although its disclosure still fell short (P15).

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