



## Law Enforcement Guide to Requests for Information

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## I. PREFACE

Blizzard Entertainment is committed to assisting law enforcement, to the extent permitted by law, in investigations involving the abuse of Blizzard's online gaming environment in connection with unlawful activity. This Law Enforcement Guide is designed to serve that purpose by providing information to facilitate law enforcement requests for information held by Blizzard. The Guide specifies what information is collected by Blizzard, how long that information is retained, how to tailor requests to ensure Blizzard produces the specific information sought, and the legal process necessary to permit Blizzard to disclose different types of information. The Guide also addresses the most frequently asked questions from law enforcement about seeking information from Blizzard. Finally, the Guide provides contact information for Blizzard personnel dedicated specifically to responding to law enforcement requests, including emergency requests.

## II. INTRODUCTION

Blizzard is one of the world's leading developers of online computer games. Most of Blizzard's games permit players to communicate and interact with other players in an online environment. Although the ability to communicate in-game makes Blizzard's games more enjoyable, Blizzard recognizes that some users may abuse this functionality to engage in unlawful activity.

Blizzard seeks to make its gaming environment safe and secure for all of its players. Accordingly, Blizzard is committed to a high level of cooperation with law enforcement to assist in investigating and identifying those involved in any activity that undermines this goal.



Blizzard believes that educating law enforcement about the user information it retains, and Blizzard's ability to lawfully disclose that information, will help advance both Blizzard's goals and the goals of law enforcement. Blizzard created this Law Enforcement Guide to streamline the process of requesting information, and to provide transparency about Blizzard's ability to provide law enforcement with various types of information.

This Guide is intended solely for use by bona fide law enforcement agencies and may not be distributed to any other person or organization without the express written authorization of Blizzard. This Guide is the property of Blizzard and Blizzard reserves the right to change any of the policies stated in this Guide at any time without notice. The information in this Guide is not intended to create any enforceable rights against Blizzard.



### III. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT WORLD OF WARCRAFT®

Blizzard's most popular game, and the game for which Blizzard receives the most law enforcement requests, is World of Warcraft® (WoW). World of Warcraft is a Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG or MMO), and may only be played when the user is connected over the internet to a WoW server administered by Blizzard. Although hundreds of thousands of people can play World of Warcraft simultaneously, players can only interact and communicate with other players on their server (also called a realm). Blizzard currently maintains more than 500 WoW servers with well over 100 dedicated to the North American region.. Each server can host more than 3500 players at the same time.

Each WoW player creates an account using Blizzard's website. In doing so, that player is required to provide his or her name, address, phone number, billing information. Each account is permitted to create up to ten characters per server, with a maximum of 50 characters per account. Each account name is unique, whereas character names are unique only to the server they belong to, and may be used by different players across multiple servers. For example, the character

*BattleScar* may belong to a different player on each server. Thus, character names are useful for locating information only if they are provided in conjunction with the name of the server that character was created on.



Players on each WoW server are separated into two separate factions: Alliance and Horde. For purposes of law enforcement requests, this is noteworthy only because neither faction can communicate in-game with any member of the other faction. On certain servers, however, a single account can create characters belonging to each faction. On those servers, a proper request for all in-game communications belonging to a single account may yield discussions from both factions.

#### IV. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT LAW ENFORCEMENT REQUESTS



Blizzard is committed to assisting with law enforcement investigations to the full extent, consistent with applicable law. The primary set of laws governing Blizzard's ability to disclose user information are found in the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. § 2701, *et seq.* ("ECPA"). Because Blizzard functions as an electronic communications service, ECPA mandates that Blizzard disclose certain user information only in response to specific types of government process, including subpoenas, court orders, and search warrants.

Generally speaking, ECPA permits the disclosure of basic user

identity and log-in information in response to a subpoena, but requires a court order to disclose additional user records, or search warrant to authorize disclosure of any online communications (“player chat”). The rules may differ also depending on whether law enforcement seeks information that has already been stored, or to capture information prospectively. For example, if law enforcement seeks ongoing information about a user’s IP address each time they log-in to their account, or the real-time monitoring of player chat, the law would require a pen register/trap and trace order in the first instance, and a Title III Wiretap Order in the latter.

Should you seek further clarification about ECPA’s restrictions on providers like Blizzard, we suggest you contact the Department of Justice’s Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section (CCIPS) at 202-514-1026.

In Blizzard’s experience, most law enforcement requests seek information about the user identity, or specific materials in connection with a particular aspect of Blizzard’s online gaming environment. Accordingly, Blizzard attempts in this Guide to provide sufficient information to permit law enforcement to serve narrowly tailored requests, issued under the appropriate criminal process, in order to facilitate Blizzard’s ability to lawfully disclose the exact information sought in a timely manner.



## V. THE CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION BLIZZARD COLLECTS AND RETAINS

### A. Public Information

Limited character profiles are available by utilizing the Armory feature located on the WorldofWarcraft.com website. This feature will not disclose any personally identifiable information, but it does allow visitors to confirm the existence of a character on a particular server. The Armory feature also allows visitors to obtain limited information about items in a character's inventory, and the skills and levels that character has obtained. Character profiles are currently available through <http://armory.worldofwarcraft.com>.



There is no need to issue legal process to Blizzard to obtain information using the Armory feature. Rather, Blizzard suggests that the law enforcement investigator make an electronic copy of the public components of the character profile in question by saving or printing the web page(s).

### B. Non-Public Information Generally

Information not included in the Armory will require legal process for Blizzard to disclose. In addition to the limited information available in the Armory, Blizzard collects and stores detailed account and character profile information, IP logs (logs showing the Internet Protocol address used to connect to Blizzard's servers), billing information, and player chat (including player conversations). Most profile and billing information is provided by the players themselves. Other information is collected by Blizzard's servers automatically or involves communications exchanged between players. Depending on the type of information sought, ECPA may require the use of a different form of legal process, the period Blizzard retains the information may differ, and the player may have the ability to determine whether the information remains available.

The specific categories of non-public information available are identified below. For each, Blizzard provides a general description of the available information to enable law enforcement to tailor requests to ensure the specific information is retrieved and able to be disclosed lawfully under ECPA. Please be mindful that World of Warcraft alone has more than 9 million active users worldwide spread across several hundred servers. Accordingly, when drafting subpoenas, court orders, or search warrants, please be as specific as possible about the account at issue, the character at issue, and the nature of the information sought. Clearly worded requests will reduce confusion, enable Blizzard to respond more quickly, and ensure that no issues arise under ECPA limiting Blizzard's ability to comply.

As a threshold matter, given the size of Blizzard's user population, it is critical that legal process include at least one of the following (a) a valid account name; a character name together with the name of the server on which that character was created; or (c) the full name and address of the individual that created a user account. In certain situations, Blizzard may be able to locate information using an IP address, a phone number, email address, or credit card information, but such requests may take significantly more time to answer, and often do not yield any useful information.

### **C. Specific Categories of Non-public Information**

#### **1. Basic user identity information**



When players register a World of Warcraft account with Blizzard, their identity information is not made publicly available. Much of this information may be produced in response to a grand jury or administrative subpoena under 18 U.S.C. § 2703(c)(2). Please note that the information provided by the user may not necessarily be accurate, as most of it is not verified by Blizzard. This information includes: account holders first and last name and address; connection records (including records of session times and durations); length of service (including start date) and types of service(s) utilized; IP address; account name; character name(s); and means of payment

(including any credit card or bank account number).

#### **2. IP address logs (recorded at time of log-in)**

Blizzard's system records the IP address assigned to the user at the time the user logs on to a Blizzard server. Blizzard's IP logs record the IP address, and the date and time the user logs in and logs off. Blizzard may produce historic IP logs in response to a grand jury or administrative subpoena under 18 U.S.C. § 2703(c)(2).

Please note that many IP addresses are provided temporarily by the user's internet service provider.

Blizzard also has the ability to capture IP addresses used by a user prospectively, and can do so upon receipt of a Pen Register/Trap and Trace Order under 18 U.S.C. § 3121.

### 3. Private user communications (messages in inbox or sent mail)

Blizzard permits users to exchange private in-game mail messages. These communications are sent from and held for users on Blizzard servers. ECPA generally restricts disclosure of private user communications less than 180 days old except in response to a search warrant. 18 U.S.C. § 2703(a).

Player mail is not maintained for more than 180 days. Thus, the legal process required for obtaining messages stored for 180 days or more is not discussed here.

### 4. Other general records or information

Blizzard also collects certain information supplied by users that is not specifically covered as basic subscriber information under 18 U.S.C. § 2703(c)(2). Such information may be disclosed under ECPA pursuant to a Court Order under 18 U.S.C. § 2703(d). This information includes the player's list of friends, the guild to which that player belongs, and other information.



## VI. CURRENT BLIZZARD RETENTION PERIODS



Because Blizzard has over eleven million active users, Blizzard does not have the ability to retain all types of information indefinitely. Accordingly, Blizzard provides below its current retention policies for the most commonly sought categories of information to permit law enforcement the ability to determine whether information will be available, and to issue written preservation requests where data might otherwise be deleted (see Section VII below). Please note that all retention periods are subject to change without notice at Blizzard's sole discretion, and may vary depending on system conditions and other circumstances.

### A. Active Accounts

#### 1. IP logs

IP logs are stored indefinitely, dating back to March 1, 2009.

#### 2. Mail messages in an active account user's inbox

Private mail messages are not retained after being deleted. Players may delete mail messages from their own mailbox. If a player does not delete a piece of mail from their mailbox, that mail will be automatically deleted from the player's mailbox after 29 days.

#### 3. Sent mail messages

Sent mail is not retained, and may only be retrieved to the extent that it continues to exist in the recipient's mailbox.

### B. Inactive Accounts

#### 1. Account information

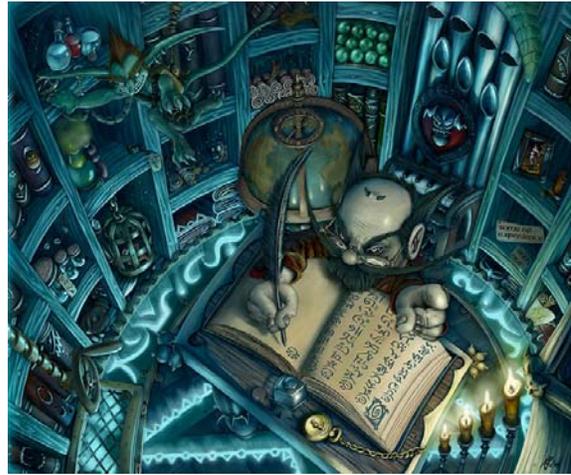
Account information is available indefinitely after an account is made inactive either voluntarily or involuntarily.

#### 2. IP logs

IP logs are stored indefinitely, dating back to March 1, 2009.

## VII. REQUESTS TO PRESERVE RECORDS

Blizzard will honor requests by law enforcement to preserve information in accordance with 18 U.S.C. § 2703(f). In response to such requests, Blizzard will preserve the specific information identified in the request for 90 days, and for an additional single 90 day period if the law enforcement entity requests the original period be extended. Please fax a signed letter on law enforcement agency letterhead requesting that Blizzard preserve the records to Peter Ty. Please provide specific guidance as to the particular information that you seek to preserve, and limit your preservation request to information for which you intend to seek legal process. Attached in our forms section is a sample preservation request.



## VIII. SERVICE OF PROCESS AND PRODUCTION OF RECORDS

In order to streamline the process for satisfying law enforcement requests, Blizzard will accept service of all subpoenas, court orders, search warrants, emergency requests and user consents by fax or mail (Blizzard's fax number and physical address are located on the cover of this Guide). Blizzard will also accept service and produce documents in response to out-of-state domestic subpoenas, court orders and search warrants.

Blizzard's preferred method for producing information in response to legal process is to submit the information in screenshots, HTML pages, MS Word documents and MS Excel spreadsheet sent via email. Blizzard will also provide a signed authentication letter for the production by PDF or Fax. Accordingly, where possible, please specify on the applicable subpoena, order or warrant (or cover letter) the email address to which results and an authentication letter (where applicable) should be sent.

The production of records in response to legal process, will generally not result in the user's account being terminated, nor foreclosing their access to the account. Accordingly, the user will retain the ability in most cases to delete, modify and edit certain data associated with the account unless Blizzard exercises its right to terminate the account.

## IX. INTERPRETING INFORMATION PRODUCED BY BLIZZARD

The explanations provided below are intended to assist law enforcement in deciphering the meaning of the information produced by Blizzard, and responds to the most frequently asked questions about Blizzard productions.



### A. IP Logs

IP Logs will be produced in an Excel spreadsheet similar to the following:

Time Stamp	Character Hex ID	Numeric Account ID	IP Address	Session Length
2007/08/14 03:01:15	000000004135D29B	36699774	24.13.123.244	1h 55m 23s
2007/08/15 04:14:43	000000004133D29G	36699774	24.13.123.212	2h 13m 52s

- The “Time Stamp” column is the date and time the message was sent. All IP logs provided by Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. are in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).
- The “Character Hex ID” column corresponds to the character. Blizzard can replace this with the character name upon request.
- The “Numeric Account ID” column corresponds to the account. Blizzard can replace this with the account name upon request.
- The “IP Address” column indicates the IP address used by the player to connect to Blizzard’s servers.
- The “Session Length” column indicates how long the online session lasted before the player disconnected.

The format of the IP logs may change over time. Please contact Blizzard if you have questions about the IP logs.

You can locate information about the IP address by performing a “Whois” lookup at any of the following sites:

<http://www.whois.sc>

<http://www.networksolutions.com/cgi-bin/whois/whois>

<http://betterwhois.com>

### B. Player Chat

Player Chat will be produced in an Excel spreadsheet similar to the following:

TIMESTAMP	FROM	TO	TEXT
3/28/2006 0:01	Mathis	&BestGuild	Hi fellow guildies! Boy am I tired!
3/28/2006 6:11	Mathis	Party	Hello party members. Let's kill some moonsters.
3/28/2006 6:12	Mathis	Party	Haha, you're right. I spelled monsters incorrectly.
3/28/2006 9:56	Gregor	Mathis	Would you like to duel me?
3/28/2006 9:56	Mathis	Gregor	Not now. I'm logging off soon.
3/28/2006 13:21	Mathis	General	Why all the bodies in Ironforge?
3/28/2006 16:14	Mathis	Trade	I'd like to buy some good armor for a level 53 mage.

- The “Timestamp” column is the date and time the message was sent.
- The FROM column reflects the name of the character that send the message.
- The TO field indicates the recipient. Where the name in the TO field has a “&” in front of it, that means that the message was sent to all online members of the sender’s guild. Where the TO field says “Party,” the message was sent to all members of the sender’s party (parties are groups of up to five players). Where the TO field consists of a channel name (usually “General,” “Trade,” “LookingForGroup,” “WorldDefense” and others), then the message was sent to all members of the sender’s faction currently monitoring that channel.
- The “Text” column represents the text of the message sent.



## X. USER CONSENT

Because ECPA provides an exception for disclosures of information with the consent of the user, Blizzard will disclose information based on user consent where sufficient information is provided to verify that the person providing the consent is the actual owner of the account at issue. Accordingly, in addition to a description of the specific information sought, the user must provide the information called for in the sample Consent Form set out below. Blizzard will be unable to release the information if the user is unable or unwilling to provide registration information and proof of identification that correlates to the information located in Blizzard user records.

## **XI. EMERGENCY DISCLOSURES**

Under 18 U.S.C. §§ 2702(b)(8) and 2702(c)(4), Blizzard is permitted to disclose information, including user identity, log-in, chat messages and other information voluntarily to a federal, state, or local governmental entity when Blizzard believes in good faith that an emergency involving danger of death or serious physical injury to any person requires such disclosure without delay. Blizzard will disclose records to assist law enforcement in the case of emergencies meeting ECPA's threshold requirements. Accordingly, to assist Blizzard in exercising its discretion, we request that law enforcement complete and submit to Blizzard writing sufficient to show the existence of the emergency. In most cases, you may simply complete Blizzard's Emergency Disclosure Form (contained in Section XII.E herein). The Emergency Disclosure request must be submitted by a law enforcement officer.

## **XII. SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR REQUESTS**

**A. Sample Subpoena Language for Basic User Identity Information and IP logs**

Records concerning the identity of the user with the ([Account Name \_\_\_\_\_] or [character name \_\_\_\_\_ on server \_\_\_\_\_]) to include name, address, email address, date of account creation and logs showing IP address and date stamps for account accesses.

**B. Sample Search Warrant Language for User Information Including Private User Communications**

Records concerning the identity of the user with the ([Account Name \_\_\_\_\_] or [character name \_\_\_\_\_ on server \_\_\_\_\_]) to include name, address, email address, date of account creation, logs showing IP address and date stamps for account accesses, the contents of all available user chat, and messages in the user's mailbox.

**C. Sample Preservation Request Letter**

*(Must be on law enforcement department letterhead)*

Custodian of Records  
Blizzard Entertainment, Inc.  
16215 Alton Parkway  
Irvine, CA 92618

Re: Preservation Request

Dear Custodian of Records:

([Account Name \_\_\_\_\_] or [character name \_\_\_\_\_ on server \_\_\_\_\_]) is the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation at this agency. I hereby request pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 2703(f) that the following information associated with said account be preserved pending the issuance of a search warrant or other legal process seeking disclosure of such information: *[Specify information to be preserved]*.

If you have any questions concerning this request please contact me at [insert email address and phone contact]

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,  
(Your Signature)  
(Your Name Typed)  
(Your Title Typed)

**D. Sample Consent Form**

I am the registrant for the following World of Warcraft account(s):

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I understand that the "\_\_\_\_\_" agency/department is conducting an official criminal investigation and has requested that I grant my consent to authorize the agency listed above to access, request, receive, review, copy and otherwise utilize, as they deem appropriate, the following information from the above profiles:

---

I hereby authorize Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. to provide to any agent of the above referenced agency the above-specified information associated with the account(s) identified above.

The following information should be used to verify my identity:

Name for the account: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address for account: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing address for account: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code for account: \_\_\_\_\_

Pursuant to this Consent, I waive any claims against, and indemnify and hold harmless, Blizzard Entertainment, Inc., its affiliates, and their respective directors, officers, agents, and employees from and against any claims, damages or expenses relating to or arising from, in whole or in part, the disclosure of such information, records and data.

I have not been promised anything in exchange for providing this consent and authorization.

In witness whereof, the undersigned makes the above statements under penalty of perjury.

Accountholder Signature and Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Law Enforcement Witness Signature, Printed Name and \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Title

**E. Sample Emergency Disclosure Form**

*(Must be on law enforcement or agency letterhead)*

**EMERGENCY DISCLOSURE FORM**

Please complete this form to assist Blizzard in exercising its discretion to disclose information to you pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 2702(b)(7) and § 2702(c).

1. What is the nature of the emergency involving death or serious physical injury?
  
2. Whose death or serious physical injury is threatened?
  
3. What specific information in Blizzard's possession related to the emergency do you need?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Officer

### XIII. WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

[www.Blizzard.com](http://www.Blizzard.com) – Blizzard Entertainment, Inc.’s Official Website

[www.WorldofWarcraft.com](http://www.WorldofWarcraft.com) – Information about Blizzard Entertainment, Inc.’s World of Warcraft game.

United States Department of Justice, Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section (CCIPS), [www.cybercrime.gov](http://www.cybercrime.gov) - DOJ guidance on authorities governing obtaining electronic evidence.

United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, publishes an investigative guide for electronic crime. The information contained in Electronic Crime Scene Investigation-A Guide for First Responders (available free of charge and downloadable from the Department of Justice website ([www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/187736.pdf](http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/187736.pdf))) helps line officers perform their jobs.

