

Anti-snooping message software gets Android release

SAN FRANCISCO, USA: - Start-up company Wickr has released snoop-thwarting messaging software tailored for Android smartphone or tablets, following last year's release of the program for Apple devices.



"Wickr not only offers the most secure form of correspondence but also helps protect our users' contacts as we ensure this information is anonymous before it leaves the sender's phone," said co-founder Robert Statica.

"Wickr does not collect any identifiable information on users nor can it read any messages or contents sent through Wickr. Therefore, no criminal or rogue government can take this information from us," Statica said.

Wickr has not released details on the number of users, but has reported exponential growth since releasing a free version for Apple mobile devices in June last year.

The free version of Wickr that debuted this week was tailored for devices running on Google's Android mobile platform that now dominates the smartphone market.

Wickr was fielded a more secure option to messaging platforms than exist at online venues such as Skype, Facebook or SnapChat.

"The release of Wickr Android for public beta comes at an important moment in history as the right to privacy is challenged by governments, corporations and criminals throughout the world," Statica said.

Secure communication is a human right

"Bound by the strong belief that private correspondence is a universal human right, San Francisco-based Wickr aims to bring free private communication to users across the globe," he added.

Wickr co-founder Nico Sell plans to build a "geek utopia" where people hold the power when it comes to who sees what they share on the Internet or from their phones.

"Freedom? Isn't there an app for that?" Sell asked in an earlier interview with AFP.

Wickr's business plan is to have hundreds of millions of people globally using free versions of the application while a small percentage opt to pay for premium features such as being able to control larger data files. More information about the application is available at mywickr.com.

Yahoo, Google, Facebook, and Microsoft are among Internet firms pushing for permission to disclose more details to users about requests for data from a variety of state organisations.

Technology companies have been eager to bolster the trust of their users by making it clearer what has actually been demanded by and disclosed to US authorities.

A vast National Security Agency surveillance programme was exposed in a series of media leaks in recent months by former US intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, who has been granted temporary asylum in Russia.

Documents divulged by Snowden have shown the NSA conducts a huge electronic dragnet, that allows them to trawl through phone records and online traffic, sometimes flouting privacy laws.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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