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a Freedom of Boozes' phones were hacked. The United Nations' special rapporteur David Weissbrodt informed that Jeffrey Bezos was "hacked through WhatsApp," as he was also "hacked by Saudi's hit list." In January 2023, an investigation by The Wire claimed that BJP, an Indian political party, allegedly used an app called Tok Fog which was capable of hacking inactive WhatsApp accounts en masse to mass message their contacts with propaganda. According to the report, a whistleblower with app access was able to hack a test WhatsApp account controlled by reporters "within minutes".[306][307] It was later determined that staff of their Meta investigative team had been duped by false information; The Wire fired the staff member involved and issued a formal apology to its readers.[308]

In December 2015, it was reported that terrorist organization ISIS had been using WhatsApp to plot the November 2015 Paris attacks.[309] According to The Independent, ISIS also uses WhatsApp to traffic sex slaves.[310]

In March 2017, British Home Secretary Amber Rudd said encryption capabilities of messaging tools like WhatsApp are unacceptable, as news reports that Khalid Masood used the application several minutes before perpetrating the 2017 Westminster attack.

Rudd publicly called for police and intelligence agencies to be given access to WhatsApp and other encrypted messaging services to prevent future terror attacks.[311]

In April 2017, the perpetrator of the Stockholm truck attack reportedly used WhatsApp to exchange messages with an ISIS supporter shortly before and after the incident. The messages involved discussing how to make an explosive device and a confession to the attack.[312]

In April 2017, nearly 300 WhatsApp groups with about 250 members each were reportedly being used to mobilize stone-throwing in Jammu and Kashmir to disrupt security forces' operations at encounter sites. According to police, 90% of these groups were closed down after police contacted their admins.[313]

Further, after a six-month probe which involved the arrest of 79 individuals, WhatsApp groups, such as "Bharat Rakshak" or "India's 286 million soldiers" have been targeted under anti-terrorism laws. On February 22, 2017, India's National Investigation Agency arrested three men who were alleged to have created and managed WhatsApp group chats known as "The Islamic Front".

The FBI stated that the ISIS sympathizer who was plotting to assassinate George W. Bush was suspected to have accessed his WhatsApp data according to the arrest warrant for the suspect, Hani Muhammad Ali. His WhatsApp account was traced under surveillance [315]. There are numerous ongoing scams on WhatsApp that hackers spread viruses or malware.[316]

In May 2016, some WhatsApp users were reported to have been tricked into downloading a third-party application called WhatsApp Gold, which was part of a scam that infected the users' phones with malware.[317]

A message that promises to allow access to their WhatsApp friends' conversations, or their contact lists, has become the most popular hit against anyone who uses the application in Brazil. Clicking on the message actually sends paid text messages. Since December 2016, more than 1.5 million people have clicked and lost money.[318]

[319] Another application called GB WhatsApp is considered malicious by cybersecurity firm Symantec because it usually performs some unauthorized operations on end-user devices.[320]

WhatsApp is owned by Meta, whose main social media service Facebook has been blocked in China since 2009.[321]

In September 2017, security researchers reported to The New York Times that the WhatsApp service had been completely blocked in China.[322][323]

On April 19, 2024, Apple removed WhatsApp from the App Store in China, citing government orders that stemmed from national security concerns.[324][325]

This section needs to be updated. The reason given is: Mentioned deadline has long passed. Please help update this article to reflect recent events or newly available information.(February 2025)

On May 9, 2014, the government of Iran announced that it had proposed to block the access to WhatsApp service to Iranian residents. "The reason for this is the assumption of WhatsApp by the Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, who is an American Zionist", said Abdoosamad Khorramabadi, head of the country's Committee on Internet Crimes. Subsequently, Telegram became the de facto replacement for WhatsApp in Iran. This move caused controversy among Iranians, particularly those living abroad, who expressed concern over potential censorship and internet freedom issues. Some activists argued that blocking WhatsApp would isolate them from international communication channels and hinder their ability to receive news and support from outside the country.

In August 2014, the president for Latin America was arrested in Brazil for not cooperating with an investigation in which WhatsApp conversations were requested.[330]

On March 2, 2016, at dawn the next day, Dzonan was released because the Court of Appeal held that the arrest was disproportionate and unreasonable.[331]

On May 2, 2016, mobile providers in Brazil were ordered to block WhatsApp for 72 hours for the service's second failure to cooperate with criminal court orders.[332]

Once again, the block was lifted following an appeal, after less than 24 hours.[333]

Brazil's Central Bank issued an order to payment card companies Visa and Mastercard on June 23, 2020, to stop working with WhatsApp on its new electronic payment system. A statement from the Bank asserted the decision to block the Facebook-owned company's latest offering was taken to "preserve an adequate competitive environment" in the mobile payments space and to ensure "functioning of a payment system that's interchangeable, fast, secure, transparent, open and cheap."

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[335] The government of Uganda banned WhatsApp and Facebook, along with other social media platforms, to enforce a tax on the use of social media.[336]

Users are to be charged USD.200= per day to access these services according to the new law set by parliament.[337]

The United Arab Emirates banned WhatsApp video chat and VoIP call applications[338][339]

in as early as 2013[340] due to what is often reported as an effort to protect the commercial interests of their home grown nationally owned telecom providers (du and Etisalat).[340]

Their app ToTok has received press suggesting it is able to spy on users.[339][341]

In July 2021, the Cuban government blocked access to several social media platforms, including WhatsApp, to curb the spread of information during the anti-government protests.[342]

In December 2021, the Swiss army banned the use of WhatsApp and several other non-Swiss encrypted messaging services by army personnel. The ban was prompted by concerns of US authorities potentially accessing user data without consent, raising privacy and security issues. The ban affected all active military personnel and contractors, leaving civilian employees unaffected. Communication remained essential for operational purposes, leading to the implementation of strict protocols to ensure compliance while maintaining necessary connectivity.

In October 2021, the Election Commission of India advised voters to refrain from installing WhatsApp and other instant messaging apps ahead of the upcoming general elections. The rationale provided was to prevent voter intimidation attempts and misuse of personal information by candidates or parties. However, many citizens continued to use these apps for legitimate communication, and enforcement proved challenging.

The organization reported a massive drop-off in traffic for the blocked services, though the country's government made no official statements about the block[344]

The Saudi Central Bank (SAMA) has prohibited local banks from using instant messaging applications like WhatsApp for customer communication. This decision aims to enhance data security and protect customer information.[345]

In mid-2013, WhatsApp Inc. filed for the DMCA takedown of the discussion thread on the XDA Developers forums about the then popular third-party client "WhatsApp Plus".[346]

In 2015, some third-party WhatsApp clients that were reverse-engineering the WhatsApp mobile app, received a cease and desist to stop activities that were violating WhatsApp legal terms. As a result, users of third-party WhatsApp clients were also banned.[347]

WhatsApp launched two business-oriented apps in January 2018,[59] separated by the intended userbase: A WhatsApp Business app for small companies[348] An Enterprise Solution for bigger companies with global customer bases, such as airlines, e-commerce retailers and banks, who would be able to offer customer service and conversational commerce (e-commerce) via WhatsApp app chat, using live agents or chatbots (as far back as 2015, companies like Meteordeck[349] had provided unofficial solutions for enterprises to attend to large numbers of users, but these were shut down by WhatsApp) In October 2020, Facebook announced the introduction of pricing tiers for services offered via the WhatsApp Business API, charged on a per-message basis.[350][351]

WhatsApp handled ten billion messages per day in August 2012.[352] growing from two billion in April 2012.[353] and one billion the previous October.[354]

On June 13, 2020, WhatsApp announced that they had reached their new daily record by processing 27 billion messages.[355]

According to the Financial Times, WhatsApp came to SMS on mobile phones where Skype did to international calling on landlines'. [356]

By April 22, 2014, WhatsApp had added 50 million monthly revenue earners. 700 million additional users joined WhatsApp between January 2014 and February 2014. WhatsApp had 1.5 billion monthly active users worldwide as of March 2015. WhatsApp has approximately 1.5 billion monthly active users every month, or 833.00 million active users per day.[83][359]

In May 2017, it was reported that WhatsApp users spend over 340 million minutes on video calls each day on the app. This is the equivalent of roughly 646 years of video calls per day.[360]

By February 2017, WhatsApp had over 1.2 billion users globally,[88] reaching 1.5 billion monthly active users by the end of 2017.[361]

In January 2020, WhatsApp reached over 5 billion installs on Google Play Store making it only the second non-Google app to achieve this milestone.[362]

As of February 2020, WhatsApp had over 2 billion users globally.[24][363]

India is by far WhatsApp's largest market in terms of total number of users. In May 2014, WhatsApp crossed 50 million monthly active users in India, which is also its largest country by the number of monthly active users,[364] then 70 million in October 2014, making users in India 10% of WhatsApp's total user base.[365]

In February 2017, WhatsApp reached 200 million monthly active users in India.[366]

Israel is one of WhatsApp's strongest markets in terms of ubiquitous usage. According to Globes, already by 2013 the application was installed on 92% of all smartphones, with 86% of users reporting daily use.[367]

In July 2024, WhatsApp reached 100 million users in the United States.[368]

WhatsApp competes with a number of messaging services. They include services like iMessage (estimated 1.3 billion active users)[369], WeChat (1.26 billion active users)[370][371]), Telegram (900 million users)[372]), Viber (260 million active users)[373]), LINE (217 million active users)[374]), KakaoTalk (57 million active users)[375]), and Signal (40 million active users)[376]). Both Telegram and Signal in particular were noted for gated registration spikes around WhatsApp outages and controversies.[377][378]

WhatsApp has increasingly focused on competing directly with other major messaging apps, rather than relying solely on referrals from other services. Key competitors include Messenger, Signal, and various regional players like Wechat, Line, and VKontakte. WhatsApp continues to innovate with features like disappearing messages, voice notes, and status updates to remain competitive in the crowded market.

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