

HOW DIFFERENT IS TELEGRAM FROM WHATSAPP

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Telegram isn't end-to-end encrypted by default - - this is because it does not rely on third-party backups like WhatsApp does, the company said in a separate blog post. | Photo Credit: [Getty Images](#)

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Last week, [messaging app Telegram said it has surpassed 500 million monthly active users](#). A surge that can be largely attributed to WhatsApp's latest privacy policy update.

"This is a significant increase compared to last year, when 1.5 million users signed up every day. We've had surges of downloads before, throughout our 7-year history of protecting user privacy. But this time is different," CEO Pavel Durov said.

But how different is Telegram from WhatsApp?

Telegram uses a real-time secure cloud that allows "seamless multi-device sync" and provides access to past chat history, large-group chats and channels, persistent message history, and minimal storage usage on the phone. The app uses the MTProto encryption, designed for access to a server API from applications running on mobile devices. The protocol contains a cryptographic layer that encrypts messages prior to being transmitted through the server.

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The app also offers 'Secret Chats' feature, which adds another layer of encryption to only store messages on one device, and not on the cloud. These chats can neither be screenshot, nor be forwarded to another user. Users can also delete messages by setting a self-destruct timer ranging from one second to a week.

At the other end, WhatsApp says messages sent on its platform are end-to-end encrypted by default, meaning that Facebook cannot access those messages. But it can access other user information like location, group details and status.

Telegram isn't end-to-end encrypted by default - - this is because it does not rely on third-party backups like WhatsApp does, the company said in a separate blog post. It stores user data in cloud chat data in multiple data centres across the globe that are controlled by different legal entities spread across different jurisdictions. Telegram says it does not give up data to third parties.

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WhatsApp backs iPhone user data on iCloud and Android user data in Google Drive. Data backed up on third-party applications like Google Drive and iCloud is not encrypted, and "is accessible to hackers and the government via cloud storage", according to Durov.

Feature differentiation

Telegram offers a variety of features, including multiple-device login and segregation of chats

into specific folders.

The app supports file sharing (photos, videos, audio files) of up to 2GB each, while WhatsApp has a 100MB limit. Telegram also does not compress file quality by default, but gives an option to the user if they want to save data.

Telegram groups, both private and public, allow up to 2 lakh members, against WhatsApp's 100 members per group.

Also Read | [WhatsApp says latest update does not change its data-sharing practices with Facebook](#)

Telegram also provides unlimited free cloud storage for users, unlike WhatsApp that allows users to back up messages in Google Drive or iCloud.

Telegram users can search to find public channels, groups and bots, the company will soon provide group video call feature.

Ads monetisation

Both WhatsApp and Telegram don't support ads on their platforms. But both platforms do monetise in other ways.

WhatsApp charges commission for sales made through its Business app. Telegram, on the other hand, [said last month that it will introduce paid features for its business and premium users](#). But messaging features in Telegram will always remain free for basic users, Durov had said in December last year.

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Facebook bought the platform in 2014, and gradually changed the way it accessed user data from WhatsApp. The social networking company is now showing WhatsApp users a 'take it or leave it' attitude with the latest policy update.

WhatsApp's rival messaging app Signal gained recognition as WhatsApp users looked for alternative apps. Tesla CEO Elon Musk's tweet encouraging users to switch to Signal also gave an extra lift.

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