

Apps

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Messaging app Telegram added 5m new users the day after WhatsApp outage

'Frankly, we'd rather have a gradual organic growth,' admits secure messaging startup, after suffering its own downtime

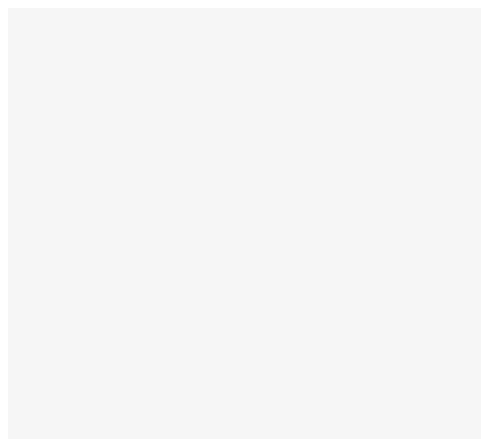
Stuart Dredge

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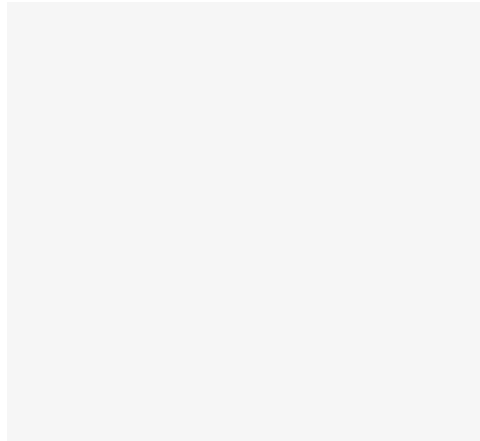


Facebook may have agreed to pay up to \$19bn for messaging app WhatsApp, but that company's rivals may benefit from an influx of new users as a result.

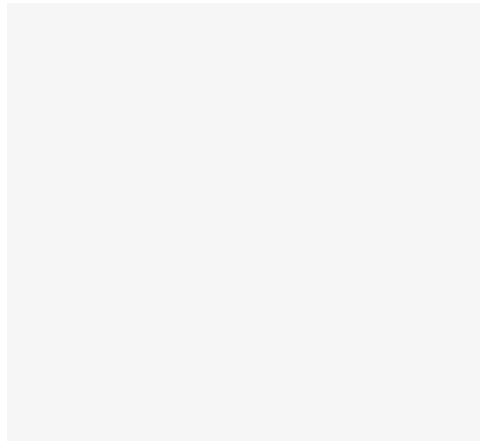


One, **Telegram Messenger**, is already feeling the impact. "4.95 million people signed up for Telegram today. Telegram is #1 most downloaded iPhone app

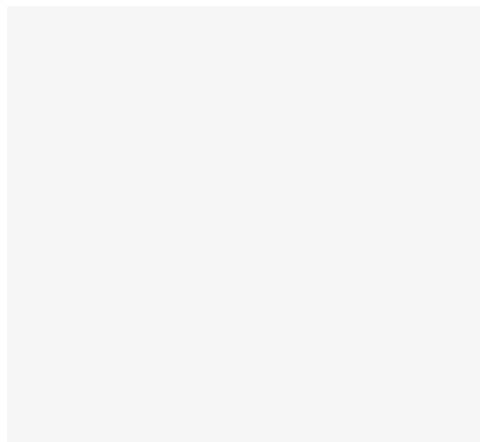
in 48 countries,” the company revealed late last night (23 February) through its official Twitter account.



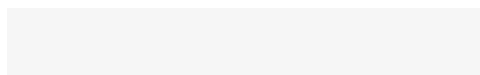
That’s a startling number for an app that as recently as October 2013 had around 100,000 daily active users. A case of WhatsApp users fleeing from Facebook? Perhaps, but it seems no coincidence that Telegram’s 5m signups happened the day after a high-profile outage for WhatsApp, when its service was unavailable for four hours.

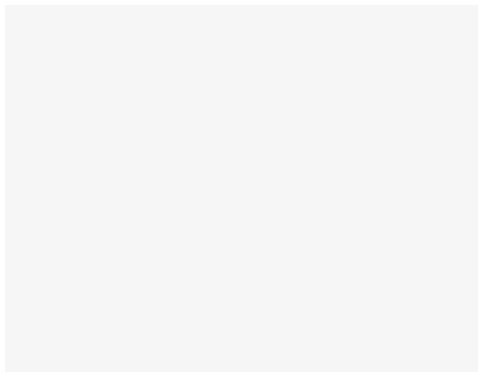


Telegram wasn’t immune from technical problems over the weekend though, as it struggled to cope with the huge number of new users. “Due to the insane growth rate our cluster in Europe experienced a 2-hour downtime today. We are adding servers, but it takes time,” tweeted the company.

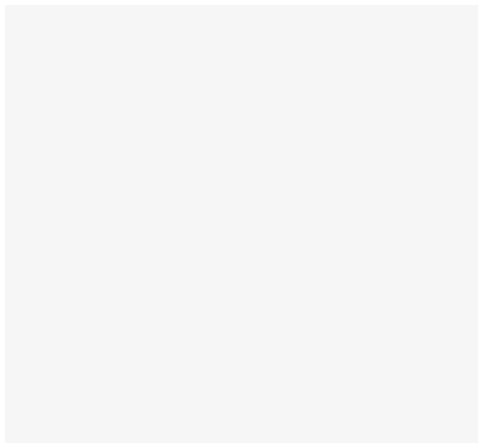


“We expected 1 million registrations per day max; 5 million daily signups seemed crazy,” its account replied to one user, before telling another that: “Frankly, we’d rather have a gradual organic growth. Our plan was to be ready for this kind of growth in 2 months, not now.”

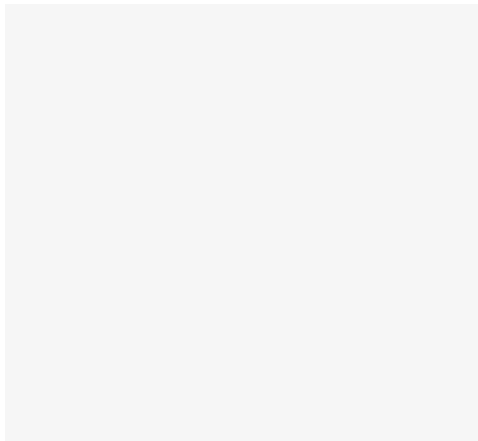




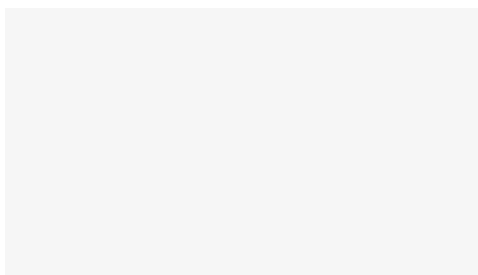
Telegram launched for iPhone in August 2013, then Android that October. It is run by a team based in Berlin, although its financial backer is Russian entrepreneur Pavel Durov, the founder of Russian social network vKontakte. He worked with his brother Nikolai on Telegram.

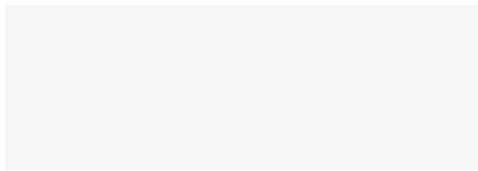


The pair set out their vision for the encrypted messaging app on its website. “Telegram is not intended to bring revenue, it will never sell ads or accept outside investment. It also cannot be sold,” it [explains in an online FAQ](#).

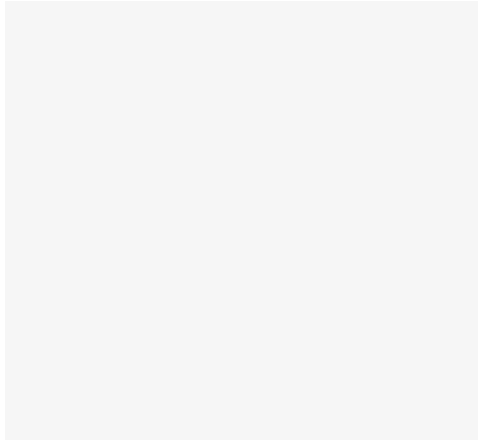


“We’re not building a ‘user base’, we are building a messenger for the people. Pavel Durov, who shares our vision, supplied Telegram with a generous donation through his Digital Fortress fund, so we have quite enough money for the time being. If Telegram runs out, we’ll invite our users to donate or add non-essential paid options.”





Telegram has an open API for other developers to build their own apps based on its technology, including versions for Windows, Mac and Linux computers, and Windows Phone smartphones.



Telegram is not the only encrypted messaging app seeing a boom in signups following WhatsApp's acquisition by Facebook. TechCrunch reports that Swiss startup Threema - which also touts encryption as a key feature - **doubled its user base in 24 hours** late last week, with 200,000 new users paying €1.79 each for the app.

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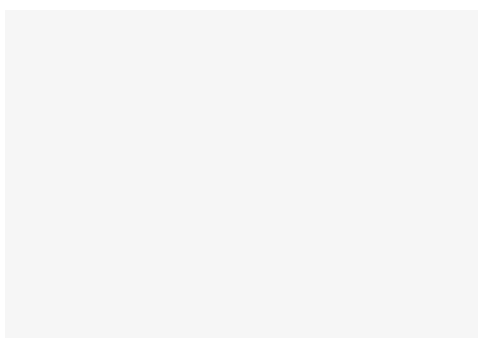
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