App Review: Telegram

Telegram

The world's **fastest** messaging app.
It is **free** and **secure**.

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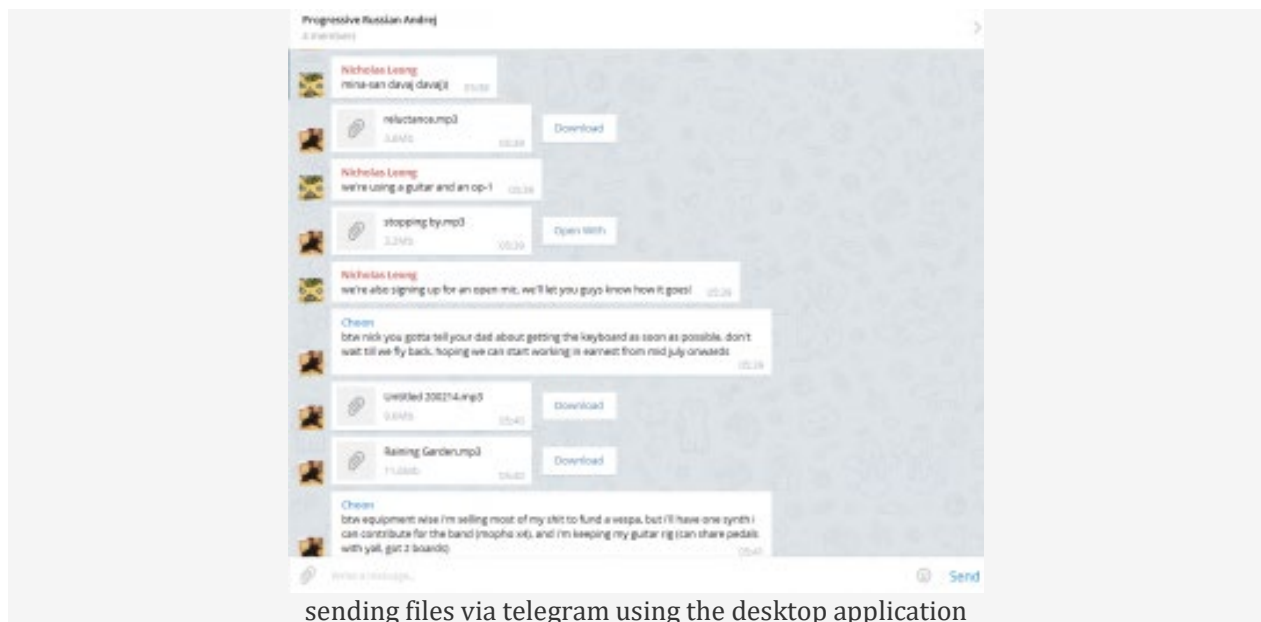### Start Messaging >

INTRODUCTION

Telegram is one amongst several data-based messaging apps available on the mobile market. Its most striking function (although not its distinguishing one) is enabling the user to access and send messages from multiple devices via a data connection. In this review, I will detail the unique functions of this app and how it stands out from relatives such as *Whatsapp or LINE.*

Why does anyone need this app?

The popularity of data-based messaging apps dramatically increased along with the greater availability of WiFi and data networks, allowing users to tap on internet connectivity to send messages to another person using the app. This allows users like myself to circumvent the hassle, cost, and limitations of sending an SMS. Along with this core function are also many other important modern functionalities. These include the sharing of photos, sharing your location, creating group conversations, and social

features such as profile pictures and the ability to see if your contacts are online or not – affording a greater level of connectivity and immediacy.

One might ask however, why would Telegram be a user's choice over something like Whatsapp? Well, telegram distinguishes itself in a few ways that in my opinion puts it at an advantage over other similar tools. One unique function is the ability for users to send regular files to each other and to group chats – including word documents, recordings, zip files and many more. This makes the app much more useful than Whatsapp for example in certain situations, such as mobile work groups or to use a specific example pertinent to myself – musical bands that wish to share music and song ideas. A second function of Telegram that makes it distinct is that it is also available seamlessly as a standalone program on the PC/Mac. This opens up Telegram to a higher level of convenience and uses, especially for the working class.

sending files via telegram using the desktop application

Why does it need to be an app?

It needs to be an app as one of the main uses of Telegram is to enable cross-platform messaging and access to those messages. In this way, a single user can have access to his/her Telegram account along with all of his/her conversations whether or not he/she is outside with a mobile phone, in school with a laptop, or in front of a PC.

What compels people to use/not use it?

Given Telegram's superior functionality to most of its relatives, I personally feel that this is a good reason for more individuals to use this app. However, as it was developed fairly recently (as compared to Whatsapp) and was launched when its competitor apps were booming in popularity, the main reason for people not to use it is that most of their social groups will still be users of Whatsapp or other apps. And as it is with many such apps, it requires the receiving party to also have the app installed (no cross-interfacing).

INTERACTION

It is easy and pleasing to use as most of the app reacts as I expect it to – pushing on each chat tab brings me to the chat window, and touching the top bar in the chat window allows me access to the metadata and administrative functions of the chat (such as managing members in a group chat, adding a group

chat photo, etc.), which makes sense. One important feedback feature which is present in the app is the sound notification that is played when your message is successfully sent to the chat.

However, one improvement that I think could be made is that instead of automatically opening a chat window when I select one of my contacts from the contact list, the app could first send me to that particular contact's profile (where I can choose to send a message or check the person's profile picture to see if it is the correct person that I intend to chat with) as it is more in line with current conventions. When you select a contact from the iPhone contact list for example, or the Whatsapp contact list, it brings you to the contact's profile rather than immediately to a message window.
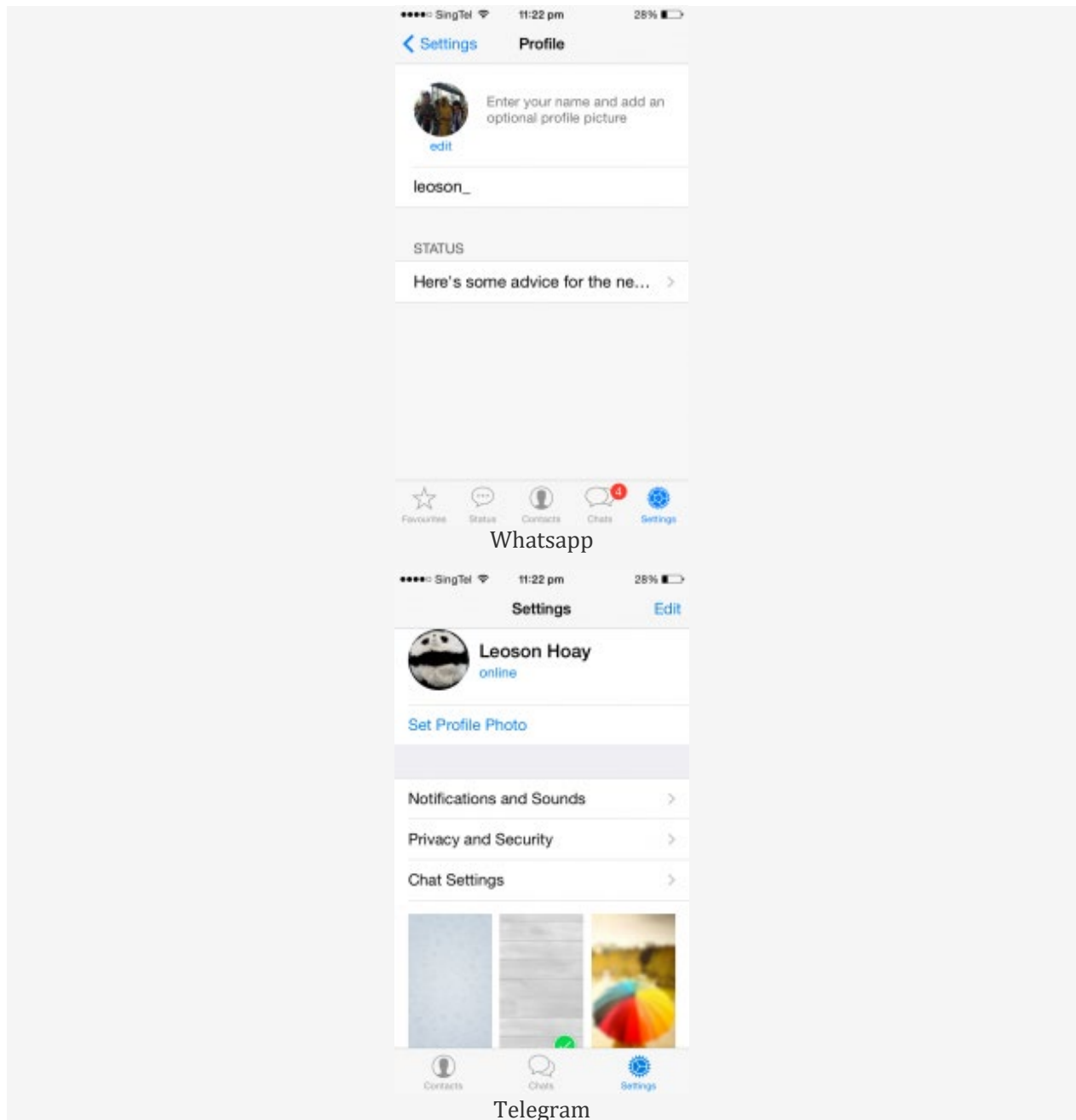
INTERFACE

Does it follow design patterns?

Both Telegram and Whatsapp use a similar pattern for their interfaces, which is a vertical navigation for their chat windows and tabs to indicate different windows. One pattern that is striking is the use of circles to present the profile pictures of users or photos of chat groups – which makes the interface slightly less cluttered (as compared to using squares).

Is the interface effective in communicating its functions?

The main function of the app, which is to enable smooth and immediate transfer of messages or files between people and devices is well communicated by its clearly labelled tabs. As shown in the screenshot below, the tabs for window are clearly labelled with both icons and text, and each window also has a clear heading on the top of the screen which minimizes clutter and confusion. In comparison to Whatsapp, Telegram clearly excels in minimizing the number of tabs to juggle by combining related functions into the same tab.

Whatsapp

Telegram

TO CONCLUDE

In conclusion, I think that Telegram is a great and simple app to use, and it excels in both form and function over many of its competitors. I feel that it is likely to continue to gain more traction and attract more users unless other apps like Whatsapp or LINE can keep up or outdo it in terms of functionality and innovation.