

[Tech] How to create anonymous Telegram and Signal accounts without a phone

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Tags: [#tech](#) [#privacy](#) [#anonymity](#) [#telegram](#) [#signal](#) [#whonix](#)

This guide (Whonix + Anbox) also works for other apps, such as Signal, Samurai Wallet, Schildi Chat and more.

Smartphones are bad for privacy. They have many privacy-invading sensors such as front and back cameras, microphone, cell tower location, GPS location, fingerprint sensor, Bluetooth and NFC and an unchangeable device ID (IMEI). In addition, it's difficult to use apps without risking IP leaks — for example, Orbot doesn't have a kill switch. Likewise, in many countries it's difficult to buy a prepaid sim card without government ID (https://prepaid-data-sim-card.fandom.com/wiki/Registration_Policies_Per_Country), which means that people need to rely on gray markets or second hand sim cards in order to get an anonymous phone number. Even with a KYC-free sim card, your physical location is continuously sent to cell towers and your movements are saved in the operator's database, which is accessible to the state and corporations.

In comparison, desktop computers and laptops are much better for privacy. No GPS or cell tower connections, no sim card and if there is a built-in camera or microphone, you can cover it, disable it in the kernel or physically remove it. With Tails and Whonix, it's easy to ensure that all traffic is routed via Tor without leaks. In addition, you can buy KYC-free SMS verification services for Bitcoin. Unlike physical sim cards and esim, SMS verification websites don't know your physical location and you don't need a phone to use them.

This guide describes how to download Anbox (Android emulator) in Whonix, use a SMS verification service to register a Telegram account, and link your new Telegram account to Telegram Web or Telegram Desktop. (An Android emulator is necessary, because Telegram requires you to signup via the app and doesn't allow signup via Telegram Web or Desktop.)

How to create a Telegram account without a phone:

1) Install Whonix. Whonix is used because it automatically routes all software through Tor, including the Android emulator. Select your operating system on the Whonix homepage for installation steps: <https://www.whonix.org/>

2) Install Anbox emulator inside Whonix Workstation. Open Whonix Workstation and follow these steps to install Anbox: <https://www.whonix.org/wiki/Anbox>

(An alternative is to install Android-x86 VM and specifically configure it to connect to Whonix Gateway: <https://android-x86.org/>. However this guide focuses on Anbox.)

3) Install Telegram. Open Whonix Workstation, then click on Terminal. Enter these commands:

```
wget https://telegram.org/dl/android/apk
```

```
anbox                                launch                                --package=org.anbox.appmgr          --
component=org.anbox.appmgr.AppViewActivity
```

```
adb install Telegram.apk
```

4) Open Anbox via "Start menu → Accessories → Anbox" and click on the Telegram icon.

5) Use a SMS verification website such as <https://smspva.com>, <https://textverified.com>, <https://sms4sats.com> or <https://juicysats.com> and choose "Telegram". These websites are all KYC-free and accept either on-chain Bitcoin or Lightning Bitcoin. One SMS verification costs around 50 cents-\$2. If the provided number doesn't work, you can get a new number for free or get a refund.

Alternatively you can try free SMS websites such as <https://sms24.me> or <https://onlinesim.ru> but these numbers are often already used. If the website requires an email address, you can create an anonymous email address via <https://onionmail.org>, <https://msgsafe.io> or <https://protonmail.com>.

6) Register your Telegram account in Anbox with the provided phone number from the SMS verification website. After signing up, add a password (Settings → Privacy and Security → Two-step verification → Cloud password) and recovery email address (e.g. an anonymous OnionMail.org address).

This is important, because SMS verification websites sometimes reuse numbers. If you set a password, no one will be able to take your number or login to your account. For privacy, you can also set a username (Settings → Edit profile → Username) and hide your phone number (Settings → Privacy and Security → Phone number).

7) Connect your new Telegram account to Telegram Web or Telegram Desktop (optional). Download Telegram Desktop in Whonix Workstation or visit <https://web.telegram.org/> in Tor Browser. Then enter your number and you will receive a login code to your Telegram App in Anbox.

Important: Don't delete the Telegram App or uninstall Anbox, because you still need it for login codes, otherwise you will lose your account.

Now you can send messages via Telegram and join Telegram channels. Remember that regular messages, groups and channels are not encrypted. Only "Secret Chats" between 2 people are encrypted.

Recommended Telegram groups:

Bitcoin <https://t.me/bitcoinp2pmarketplace> https://t.me/microlancer_io <https://t.me/sovereignbitcoiner> <https://t.me/sovrnbitcoiner> <https://t.me/gnbteam>

Monero <https://t.me/moneromarket> <https://t.me/monerojobs> <https://t.me/localmonero>

Agorism <https://t.me/agoristmarket> <https://t.me/shopagorist>

If you want an encrypted messenger for 1-on-1 and group chats that doesn't require a smartphone or phone number, works in Tor Browser, and has web, desktop and mobile apps, try Matrix (<https://matrix.org>, <https://app.element.io>).

While it's possible to install Signal in Anbox, you can't link it to Signal Desktop, as there is no way to spoof the in-app camera in order to "scan" the QR code. In addition, it isn't possible to register a new number via Signal Desktop and Signal doesn't offer a web version. However, it's possible to register via Signal-CLI and link it to Signal Desktop — all inside Whonix Workstation. The setup is slightly more complicated, but you only need to install it once, then you can enjoy access to Signal inside Whonix, without the risks of a smartphone nor the lag of Anbox.

1) Install Signal-CLI: <https://github.com/AsamK/signal-cli/>

2) Get an anonymous virtual number from SMSPVA, JuicySMS or TextVerified for Bitcoin or Monero

3) Visit <https://signalcatchas.org/registration/generate.html> in Tor Browser and complete the captcha. Click on "Inspect Element → Console" and copy the long string that begins with `signalcaptcha://`

4) Remove the prefix `signalcaptcha://` from the long string. Now you have your captcha code and can signup.

5) Enter this command to signup (replace +1555444333 with your phone number):

```
torsocks ./signal-cli -a +1555444333 register --captcha "paste captcha here"
```

6) Get your verification code and enter this command (replace 123456 with your code):

```
torsocks ./signal-cli -a +1555444333 verify 123456
```

7) Add your username and avatar (required, if you want to join group chats):

```
torsocks ./signal-cli -a +1555444333 updateProfile --name MyUsername --avatar ./
```

my_avatar.jpg

8) Initialize your account by sending a test message to yourself and receiving it:

```
torsocks ./signal-cli -a +1555444333 send -m test +1555444333
```

```
torsocks ./signal-cli -a +1555444333 receive
```

9) Add a PIN, so that no one can re-register your number or login to your account (in case the SMS verification website reuses numbers). Replace 1234 with your PIN:

```
torsocks ./signal-cli -a +1555444333 setPin 1234
```

10) Install Signal Desktop: <https://github.com/signalapp/Signal-Desktop>

11) Launch Signal Desktop, screenshot the displayed QR code and save it to your computer (e.g. as signal_qr_code.png)

12) Decode the QR code (if you don't have zbarimg, install it with `sudo apt install zbar-tools`):

```
zbarimg signal_qr_code.png
```

13) Copy the string that begins with `sgnl://linkdevice`

14) Enter this command to link to Signal Desktop:

```
torsocks ./signal-cli -a +1555444333 addDevice --uri "paste string here"
```

15) Now you can send messages and join groups via Signal Desktop.

Important: Don't uninstall Signal-CLI, you will need it if you need to relink Signal Desktop, pair to another device or change your username/avatar/PIN.