



# 2021 WhatsApp privacy policy updates

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In January 2021, WhatsApp announced an update to its privacy policy, set to take effect on February 8, 2021 (later delayed).

<sup>[1]</sup> Key changes to the policy included:

- Clarifying how WhatsApp processes user data.
- Detailing how WhatsApp works with businesses, including the use of WhatsApp Business accounts and how data from these interactions might be shared with Facebook.
- While WhatsApp had shared some data with Facebook since its acquisition in 2014, the update provided more explicit details about the types of data shared and the purpose, particularly concerning business communications. The announcement triggered widespread concern and confusion among users. Many users expressed discomfort with the prospect of more of their data being shared with Facebook, citing concerns about privacy and the potential for misuse of personal information. There was also frustration with the policy update requiring users to accept the new terms to continue using WhatsApp, leaving many feeling they had no real choice.

Initial reports and social media discussions led to some misinformation, with some users incorrectly believing WhatsApp would be able to read their private messages.

The privacy policy update led to a significant surge in downloads and usage of alternative messaging platforms.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

## Response [\[ edit | edit source \]](#)

Faced with widespread backlash and user migration, WhatsApp issued blog posts, FAQs, and social media statements to clarify the privacy policy update, emphasising that personal messages remained end-to-end encrypted and that the changes primarily related to business interactions. WhatsApp then announced a delay in the implementation of the new policy, pushing the deadline from February 8 to May 15, 2021. This was intended to allow more time to address user concerns and provide further explanations. While the initial user exodus was significant, WhatsApp remains one of the most popular messaging applications globally.

## References [\[ edit | edit source \]](#)

- ↑ Taylor, Lenore (14 May 2021). "WhatsApp to force users to accept changes to terms of service" [↗](#). *The Guardian*.
- ↑ Nicas, Jack; Isaac, Mike; Frenkel, Sheera (13 Jan 2021). "Millions Flock to Telegram and Signal as Fears Grow Over Big Tech" [↗](#). *The New York Times*.
- ↑ Vengattil, Munsif; Mathews, Eva (13 Jan 2021). "Signal sees "unprecedented" growth after WhatsApp controversy" [↗](#). *Reuters*.

Category: WhatsApp messenger

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