B.N. Jones
LFI Week 6
Observation about using and teaching Signal app

Friends complained about getting ads on their phones about what they were texting about(!). I turned them on to Signal. Other friends I have tried to turn on to Signal give me privacy nihilist blow back. Other friends and coworkers already use Signal but (unscientific observation) they are techie-types or members of "vulnerable" populations. One the articles Alison linked to on the message board (https://medium.com/@thegrugq/campaign-information-security-ff6ac49966e1), referenced another article about political campaign security. The gist was do as much work on as possible on Signal with disappearing messages on an iPhone (https://techsolidarity.org/resources/congressional_howto.html). As an experiment, I brought up this strategy in a work meeting to see how people would react. Though some of people in the room are Signal users, I was pleasantly surprised that what my colleagues were concerned about was, as government employees, the lack of transparency something that would represent.

I don't know if I have ever clicked the "invite to Signal button" in the app when texting someone. I imagine they would be suspicious of a new app if they already didn't know what Signal was. "So and so is using Signal and you should too!" If I didn't know what Signal was, I would, at best, delete the message; or, at worst, I'd assume the person's account was hacked and shooting spam. I would pregame people a bit before inviting them to a new service.

Inviting, adding contacts, starting a group, disappearing messages are easy enough if you are familiar with phone app UX. One thing I can't do is find the groups I've made. I thought I created groups but I can't find them. Honestly, this not something I ever had a firm grasp off with built in SMS apps. I always end just up adding people manually.

My partner and I have communicated extensively on Signal for the last few years. The texting feature on phone and desktop are great. You can only use desktop version with other Signal users, but setting it as the default SMS/MMS on our phones has worked good for us. Occasional hiccups: sometimes we would notice syncing issues, and we assumed the cause was internet connectivity issues and/or our phones data settings as Signal used to only work over a data connection. MMS messages occasionally would not work with folks not on Signal. The actual phone and video chat services haven't worked as good as SMS/MMS. In our experience, the encrypted calls are really choppy and hardly work, but we haven't tested it in a while.