

Company Creates Tool to Secure Private Messages

Posted June 26, 2018

Category : Technology/Innovations

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

- 1. **eavesdropping** / `ivz drɒpɪŋ / (n) – the act of secretly listening to or gaining access to a conversation
Example: Please lock the door to prevent others from **eavesdropping**.
- 2. **encrypt** / ɛn'krɪpt / (v) – to hide information by turning it into a code
Example: Employees usually **encrypt** their private messages to prevent others from seeing them.
- 3. **negate** / nɪ'gert / (v) – to reduce the effectiveness of something
Example: Sharing your password with your friends **negates** the app's privacy features.
- 4. **unrecognizable** / ʌn'rek əg nɑɪ zə bəl / (adj) – not clear enough to be identified
Example: No one can understand the **unrecognizable** text.
- 5. **devise** / dɪ'vaɪz / (v) – to create
Example: We need to **devise** a method that reduces overtime work.

Article

Read the text below.

An information security company has created a tool that can prevent network **eavesdropping** on online private messages.

MindedSecurity recently developed Shhlack—an extension designed to **encrypt** private messages sent on the popular workplace messaging app called Slack. Currently, Slack enables employers to access data exchanged on the app. However, the new privacy tool **negates** this privilege.

To be able to use Shhlack, users must create and exchange a secret code. However, it is ideal to share this code offline to ensure security. The secret messaging can begin once users have clicked on a lock icon beside Slack’s dialogue box.

Slack users with no access to the correct password will not be able to see private messages clearly. Instead, these users will see chats only in **unrecognizable** text.

Despite the tool’s great features, MindedSecurity chief technology officer Stefano Di Paola clarified that Shhlack is currently in its trial stage and will not be available anytime soon.

Aside from MindedSecurity, software developer Open Whisper Systems also **devised** a way to secure private messages by developing an app called Signal Private Messenger. The app works in a similar fashion as other messaging programs, but it is better known for its strong encryption that disables third-party access to private exchanges. Like the Shhlack tool, Signal requires a code to view messages in order to ensure that only the receiver can read them. It also operates under a license that requires experts to test it to guarantee that it lives up to the security it promised.

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- In your opinion, should MindedSecurity make Shhlack available for use in the workplace? Why or why not?

- If the use of Shhlack was implemented in the workplace, how can employers ensure that it will only be used for work-related messaging?

Discussion B

- Why do you think a lot of people use messaging apps nowadays?

- Aside from privacy features, what other features would you like to be added to messaging apps? Discuss.