

February 2019

1. NSPCC says Facebook plans to merge messaging services 'will help groomers' and make it easier for them to target children

A CHILD protection charity has hit out at Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg over plans to merge messaging services — saying it will help groomers target kids.

The integration idea — involving Instagram, WhatsApp and Facebook — is intended to make it easier to chat with pals.

For example, someone using Facebook could send a message to a friend who only uses WhatsApp.

But the NSPCC says this would also make it easier for paedophiles to target more kids. Its online safety head Andy Burrows said: “Bringing these messaging services together creates a bigger pool of children.

“We know groomers send out messages on scale — much like phishing emails from crooks trying to steal money.

“Merging messaging could make it easier.”

As part of the change, all messages will be “end-to-end encrypted” — protection that means only the sender and recipient can see them.

But Mr Burrows added: “Encryption makes it harder for social networks or law enforcement to see if groomers are operating.”

Facebook owns all three separate services and is aiming to merge messaging by late this year or 2020.

The networks will remain stand-alone apps.

Social media consultant Matt Navarra said Facebook’s move is in part to fight back against Apple’s popular iMessage service.

A Facebook spokesman said: “There is a lot of discussion and debate as we begin the long process of figuring out the details of how this will work.”

The last full-year figures — for 2017-18 — show police recorded more than 3,000 grooming offences, around nine a day.

Where cops noted the method used to communicate with a child, more than half of the cases (53 per cent) took place on Facebook or the apps it owns.

Read more at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8283886/facebook-merger-creates-paedo-heaven/>

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2. WhatsApp restricts message-sharing to fight fake news

WhatsApp is limiting all its members to forwarding any single message up to five times in an effort to tackle the spread of false information on the platform.

The Facebook-owned business had already introduced the policy in India six months ago. The move followed a number of mob lynchings that were blamed on fake reports spread via the service.

Until now, users elsewhere could forward messages up to 20 times.

The update to the app's rules was announced at an event in Jakarta, Indonesia. The country is holding its general election in April.

The firm told the BBC it had made its decision after "carefully" evaluating the results of its half-year-long test in the country.

"The forward limit significantly reduced forwarded messages around the world," a spokeswoman added.

"[This] will help keep WhatsApp focused on private messaging with close contacts. We'll continue to listen to user feedback about their experience, and over time, look for new ways of addressing viral content."

Scrambled messages

Up to 256 users can be enrolled in a WhatsApp group. So, theoretically, a single user can now only forward a message up to 1,280 other individuals rather than the 5,120 people figure that had been possible previously. WhatsApp abused in Brazil's elections

On the frontline of India's WhatsApp fake news war.

WhatsApp sets new rules after mob killings.

There is nothing, however, to stop those on the receiving end each forwarding the message up to five times themselves.

The restriction comes at a time WhatsApp and Facebook's other services are under scrutiny for their role in the spread of propaganda and other untruths online.

Last week, Facebook announced it had removed 500 pages and accounts allegedly involved in peddling fake news in Central Europe, Ukraine and other Eastern European nations.

It also recently announced that it had employed a UK-fact-checking service to flag content on its main platform.

Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-46945642>

For more information about e safety :

- go to <http://www.blackpoolaspireacademy.co.uk>
- come into school and talk to a member of Student Services