Mobile Messaging Apps - MMAs

MMAs are software applications installed on a mobile device that allow text (and other) communications between users

There are many different products available and there are new ones being offered all the time.

Social media platforms like Facebook also offer messaging services.

Use of MMAs both for personal and professional purposes has exploded. Around 23 billion messages are sent worldwide every day - this figure is predicted to rise.

Most of us who use mobile phones or smart devices will use at least one MMA platform. They are very much a part of our lives so we need to understand some of the issues they may bring with them.

WhatsApp, Telegram and Signal are MMAs

Use of MMAs

- Chatting with friends & family
- Sending photos, GIFS & emojis
- Personal & private information shared isn't always secure

Your data = £$

- Generally, if you are using a free app - you are the product
- Data is big business
- Tech companies providing these platforms have very lucrative business models using your data to make billions each year
- This includes your location tracking, online behaviour and habits, your likes and dislikes

Use privacy settings to protect your data

MMA policies

You need to consider:
- How staff like to communicate & frequency
- Does your work involve sensitive information or pose a risk if shared

Think first...

MMAs at work

Boundaries may blur between personal & professional 'chat'
Easy to segue from social chat to work issues or chat about colleagues etc.

- Rising number of employment tribunals referring to MMA messaging
- Chats on MMAs are stored & potentially shared - leaked or even hacked

MMA use by Governments & officials make controversial headlines

- During the pandemic crucial discussions & decisions affecting everyone made on WhatsApp
- Messages 'disappeared' - no accountability

- Employers need to create rules for use of MMAs at work
- Clear policy for staff outlining expectations & acceptable & unacceptable use
- Staff must be helped to understand and follow policy

Have guidance & plans in place

- Have a communication policy & plan in case of emergency e.g. no mobile network
- Have alternatives to MMAs or an acceptable approved platform
- Staff must be helped to understand and follow policy

- Be clear about expectations & consequences for yourself, staff and others
- Lives & reputations can be ruined in 1 message

Freedom of Information & Data Protection legislation must be considered in policies