Security Agencies Have Access to Skype Messages, Report Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian security services have the ability to monitor Skype communications, IT security experts said Thursday.

Ilya Sachkov, general director of the Group-IB computer security firm, said Russian security services have been able not only to eavesdrop on communications over Skype, but also to determine users' locations "for a couple of years now," Vedomosti reported.

"That's why our company's employees are prohibited from discussing work-related issues via Skype," Sachkov said.

According to Peak Systems head Maxim Amm, when Microsoft bought Skype in May 2011, it fitted it out with a special technology for legal eavesdropping of online communications. The technology involved switching users to a special mode in which their messages are encrypted on a server where security agencies can decipher and read messages and voice

conversations.

In the original Skype settings, messages were encrypted and thus impossible for third parties to read.

Another industry expert said that Microsoft provides monitoring capabilities for all secret services worldwide, not only Russian ones, Vedomosti reported.

Mikhail Pryanishnikov, the head of Microsoft's Russian branch, said earlier that the company could legally give the Federal Security Service access to Skype's source code.

Neither the Interior Ministry nor the Federal Security Service have commented on the news, but a source in the police said that "monitoring Skype cannot be considered an insurmountable task for Russian law enforcement agencies."

Two experts on information security told Vedomosti that Russian security services do not always need a court decision to get access to private communications on Skype, and that in some cases they can eavesdrop "simply by request."

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