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Vkontakte Founder Launches Instant Messenger

By The Moscow Times

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A U.S. company owned by Pavel Durov, the founder of social network Vkontakte, has launched its first application, a mobile Web-based instant messenger called Telegram.

Durov first announced plans to build a new messenger program a year and a half ago, Vedomosti reported. It is the first project created by Digital Fortress, based in Buffalo, New York.

The free application runs on a protocol developed by Durov's brother Nikolai, the technical director of Vkontakte, Vedomosti reported.

The program, technologically and legally separate from Vkontakte, resembles other messengers like WhatsApp, which accesses a phone's contacts to populate a friends list. However, Durov's application allows users to organize a group chat of up to 100 people and send one gigabyte of video.

Telegram, currently only for Apple products, stores message data in a “cloud,” permitting users to use both iPhones and tablets to access their chats, Hopes and Fears magazine reported.

Among other advantages, messages sent through Telegram cannot be bugged by third parties.

Durov has repeatedly stated the need to increase protection of users’ personal data. He previously invited Edward Snowden to work for him.

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