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Moscow City Hall Develops App to 'Replace' Skype, Slack – RBC

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According to RBC, the app operates like a typical messaging app, with the ability to send photos and video as well as make personal and group voice calls. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

Moscow authorities have developed an internal messaging app intended as a "full replacement" for workplace communication platforms like Slack, Skype and Telegram, the RBC news website reported Thursday.

The app's appearance comes as Russia slams what it calls censorship and discrimination of government-affiliated accounts by western social media platforms. Earlier this week, President Vladimir Putin raised fines for protesters and "foreign agents," as well as on social media giants accused of "discriminating" against Russian media.

Related article: Putin Tightens Fines for Protesters, 'Biased' Social Media Giants

The TDM Messenger app first appeared on Google Play in July 2020 but disappeared from the store after RBC sent a request for comment to Moscow's IT department. A subsidiary of

Moscow’s IT department had been listed as one of the app’s developers, RBC reported.

According to RBC, the app operates like a typical messaging app, with the ability to send photos and video as well as make personal and group voice calls. The Moscow IT department subsidiary’s website touted the app as having "an unprecedented level of security, resiliency and scalability for user collaboration in government agencies," adding that it allows for encrypted messaging and voice calls.

A representative for Moscow City Hall declined to comment on the app’s development to RBC, saying only that the city’s IT department "systematically tests new solutions."

“The experience of teleworking has shown the importance of having our own developments aimed at increasing the speed, convenience and safety of communication and collaboration,” the representative told RBC.

Experts interviewed by RBC said government officials are interested in creating a secure messaging system that can operate independently from mainstream messaging services like WhatsApp and Telegram. Russia ended its largely unsuccessful attempt to block the latter app last year.

In 2019, Russia passed a controversial law allowing the country to cut its internet off from the World Wide Web in the event of a national security emergency.

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