

# Scams Surge on Kremlin-Backed Messaging App Max

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**Moskva News Agency**

The Kremlin-backed messaging app Max is facing a surge in account rental scams, with fraudsters offering users cash to hand over access to their profiles, the business newspaper Kommersant [reported](#) on Friday.

Launched in March by the tech firm VK as a homegrown alternative to WhatsApp and Telegram, Max has been promoted by authorities as a secure platform for schools, universities and government agencies. The app must now come pre-installed on all smartphones and computers sold in Russia.

According to Kommersant, as many as 1,000 ads appear daily on darknet forums and Telegram channels offering between \$10 and \$250 for temporary access to Max accounts. Scammers use legitimate accounts to bypass spam filters and trick victims into transferring money or revealing financial information.

Officials estimate that 9% of fraudulent calls in Russia now originate on Max, a figure

analysts told Kommersant could more than double by the end of 2025.

The app's developers said account rental remains an isolated problem and noted that they blocked 67,000 suspicious accounts in August. Max has also partnered with Sberbank and Kaspersky Lab to tighten security.

New laws that took effect Sept. 1 criminalize the transfer of messenger, social media and gaming accounts, as well as SIM cards, with violators facing up to two years in prison in fraud-related cases.

The Interior Ministry has [warned](#) that account rentals were among the first schemes exploited by scam call centers on Max.

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