

Social Media - Instant Messaging (Telegram, Matrix, Threema)

Post by "Cassius" of August 17, 2023 at 10:03 AM

This subject comes to mind again due to our recent outage on 8/17/23.

The big issues in choosing an alternate communication platform is something that is actually used by a significant number of people. If people don't have the platform loaded on their telephone then they won't get notifications, and it will take much longer to notify people of outages and get back in communication if something significant takes down the forum for more than a few hours.

I'd be happy to hear latest thoughts from anyone but especially from @EricR , [TauPhi](#), [Cleveland Okie](#), and others who are into the FOSS options. I don't want to tie us to a major platform where we are subject to content-based censorship, even for backup communications. Right now that doesn't seem to be an issue at all, and hopefully it will never be, but let's plan for the future.

Each of the options discussed in this subforum is probably viable and workable, but none stand out to me as the obvious choice. For purposes of backup communication and regrouping if the server suffers a catastrophic failure, it's more important to be easy to remember and easy to get to and easy to use than it is to be super-secret or encrypted. For those who know what it is I am tempted to set up an IRC channel as the easiest and most flexible, but there are many options, including some kind of public xmpp location, which is the protocol which our friend [stpeter](#) helped popularize.

So it seems to me that the main criteria for a backup communication platform would include:

1. Necessary: Free / Open Source
2. Necessary: Easy to remember web address (we can set up a domain to point there too)
3. Necessary: Quick and easy to sign up and use without using a dedicated app
4. Necessary: Allows basic moderation (keeps a list of users and potentially allows them to save an email which could be used as an emergency contact).
5. Necessary: Very simple and does not have a lot of complicated features (unlike Matrix)
6. Necessary: Not a full forum or replacement for Epicureanfriends but just a place to hold a running exchange of users where info about outages etc can be posted.
7. Necessary: Not video or audio - chat only (rules out zoom and jitsi etc)
8. Necessary: Not a high profile service run by google or facebook or twitter or reasonably likely to be under the direct control of a state-sponsored security agency. Every service is subject to that problem, but some more than others, and the more features that a service offers while still being "free" the more it is likely that the security of communications and

user data is compromised. Related to this would be - not a service aligned with an overt political or religious agenda (which would also make it more likely to be subject to attack or compromise).

9. Desirable but not necessary: Some ability to provide phone notification to users of new messages. This is the main thing that apps like Telegram and Whatsapp offer, but the problems that come with this probably make it preferable to have an easy simple web domain that can be remembered so everyone knows "If Epicureanfriends is down all I do is go here _____"

Another alternative is a simple "mailing list manager" where people can register their emergency contact email addresses, and then when we have a problem we can email that group. But if we go that route we would want some ability for members of the group to contact each other, in case is not just with the server being indisposed but with Cassius himself being indisposed!