

FTC says Amazon executives destroyed potential evidence by using apps like Signal



Now, *The Washington Post* (which is owned by Amazon founder and former CEO Jeff Bezos) reports that Amazon is just one of several companies recently accused of turning to encrypted messaging apps like Signal that can permanently erase messages automatically.

This week's filing includes screenshots of a Signal chat between two Amazon executives who said, "Are you feeling encrypted?" and proceeded to turn on disappearing messages.

`a:hover]:text-gray-63` `[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black`
`dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-bd` `dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-`
`underline-gray` `[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63` `dark:[&>a]:text-`
`gray-bd` `dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray">Image: Federal Trade`
Commission et al v. Amazon.com Inc

The FTC's lawyers say Bezos, current CEO Andy Jassy, general counsel David Zapolsky, former CEO of worldwide operations Dave Clark, and other execs are all Signal users. Bezos is

identified in the document as “a heavy Signal user” who instructed others to use the app, although the 2018 hacking of his personal cellphone may be part of the reason for that.

And because Amazon didn’t instruct employees to preserve messages sent in the app until more than 15 months after it was notified of the investigation, the FTC argues, “It is highly likely that relevant information has been destroyed as a result of Amazon’s actions and inactions.”

The FTC lawyers are pursuing discovery into Amazon’s efforts to preserve documents so they can figure out just how much information might be missing. Despite requests last fall for relevant documents about what advice Amazon gave to employees about ephemeral apps, the FTC claims that Amazon has so far refused to produce much of what was requested. If the judge finds that Amazon was negligent in failing to preserve data tied to the case, it could face sanctions, and things could get worse if the judge finds the failures were intentional.

<https://www.theverge.com/2024/4/26/24141801/ftc-amazon-antitrust-signal-ephemeral-messaging-evidence>