

# Here's what WhatsApp's upcoming privacy policy update means for brands

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Despite public pushback, Facebook-owned messaging app WhatsApp will be going ahead with the privacy policy update it announced earlier this year. While the public has begun to appreciate that WhatsApp's privacy rules are in fact still very much in favour of the user, with messages sent remaining private and encrypted at all times, what will this mean for brands that use the app to reach and engage with consumers?



Image by Thomas Ulrich from Pxabay

The benefits for brands are massive. These updates form part of Facebook's efforts to make communicating with a business secure, better and easier for everyone. The new updates will be made to business features that will help businesses engage with their users in a more intuitive and more advanced way.

2021 is the year that WhatsApp will be rolling out more ad products and features for businesses, but it will also be looking to monetise the app to a greater degree and deliver better services for users. WhatsApp is the most pervasive messaging app in South Africa, and it's free for the user. Facebook is navigating that balance between maintaining a compelling user experience, whilst funding it by giving brands access to the WhatsApp audience, but with strict protocols in place to protect privacy.



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As to what exactly is changing: a superior level of customer service; the ability to discover and interact with businesses; and a more shoppable experience.

WhatsApp will also be introducing product lists, carousels and the ability to process payments within WhatsApp - all of which will enhance users' ability to transact on the platform and engage with brands on a more commercial level - making conversational commerce a big opportunity for brands in the future.

Despite the positives for brands, some WhatsApp users aren't so sure and have tried competitors like Telegram and Signal - with the former seeing a 91% increase in downloads and the latter a 4,200% increase in the week following WhatsApp's initial announcement.



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All in all, WhatsApp's policy updates will be a boon for brands. Users should also rest assured knowing that their personal messages and calls will remain private and that the processing, storage and usage of their data are subject to global data protection acts.

Users have until 15 May to agree to or reject the terms of the new privacy policy.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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