

Threema's Success Story: From the Company's Founding to Today



In 2012,

three young Swiss software developers decided to develop an independent messaging app they could use to chat with their friends without having to expose themselves to commercial data collectors and government surveillance. They named the app “End-to-End Encrypted Messaging Application,” in short: “EEEMA.” The three “E”s were soon replaced with “Three,” and “Threema” was born.

Little did the creators know how popular their app would become. Demand was already high when the first Threema version was released at the end of 2012, and the number of users quickly grew to 250,000. Threema had caught the spirit of the age.



In 2013,

a series of events drastically raised the public's awareness of privacy issues on the Internet. First, the Snowden revelations, which unveiled the scale of the PRISM surveillance program; later, the the wiretap on Angela Merkel's mobile phone. These incidents have caused a loss of trust in the communication channels that were used until that point. Worried Internet users began to look for alternative means of communication. This was the starting point for Threema. For anonymity when purchasing the Threema app, the Threema Shop was released, which allowed Android users to pay the app with Bitcoin.



In spring of 2014,

Threema GmbH was established in Pfäffikon SZ, near Zurich. Ever since, a team of experienced software developers has been working tirelessly on Threema's development. Since 2014, the Threema app was consistently featured in the top charts of various app stores, and it's regularly praised for its high security and its unparalleled privacy protection. When Facebook took over WhatsApp in early 2014, Threema experienced a drastic rise in popularity. Over the span of a few weeks, the user base grew to 2 million.



In 2015,

Threema Gateway was introduced, an innovative and versatile API that allows to send Threema messages via one's own software.



In 2016,

Threema Work was launched, a service tuned to the needs of companies, public authorities, schools, and organizations. It meets the growing need for secure, fast, and mobile business communication, which is more important than ever due to the role the Internet plays in today's society. It's no surprise that the customer base has been steadily growing since its inception, and the app is now used as internal messaging solution in leading companies such as Mercedes-Benz Group and TK Elevator.



At the beginning of 2017,

the spotlight was on Threema Web, Threema's new web client. It enabled chatting from the comfort of the computer without making cuts in security. Half a year later, Threema calls were introduced. From then on, it was possible to conduct end-to-end encrypted calls with excellent voice quality – and without having to disclose a phone number.



In 2018,

the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) set an important legal basis for processing data: European companies were no longer allowed to use everyday messengers for business purposes because personal user data could be identified, processed, and forwarded.

In the same year, Threema Broadcast was added to the portfolio. The professional tool for top-down communication lets administrators create information retrieval systems using chat bots and reach any number of recipients via feeds and distribution lists. A few months later, Threema Safe was introduced, a backup solution that allows to automatically store the most important Threema data anonymously, secure, and independent of the mobile platform.



In 2019,

the University of Münster's Lab for IT Security conducted a security audit of the Android and iOS app and Threema Safe.



The year 2020,

was shaped to a great extent by the coronavirus pandemic, which increased the demand for mobile business communication and raised the awareness of the importance of secure communication in the event of a crisis. Working from home heightened the need for video conferencing, and Threema promptly responded with the introduction of video calls in Threema.

In September 2020, Threema further strengthened its market position by partnering with the German-Swiss investment company Afi-num Management AG, Zurich. This partnership represents a solid foundation for continuity in company development, healthy growth, and an acceleration of product development. The three founders and developers continue to lead the company according to the established principles and retain a significant ownership interest.

That same year, Threema became open source.



In 2021,

WhatsApp stirred up another controversy about data protection in messaging services when they changed their privacy policy. In response, many users switched to Threema, and the user base grew to 10 million.

With Threema OnPrem, Threema launched a self-hosting messaging solution that allows organizations with the highest security requirements to host Threema Work in a self-contained chat environment on their own servers.



In 2022,

the Swiss Army and the Swiss Police decided to introduce Threema Work in all corps and departments.

At midyear, Threema Libre was presented, a Threema version that can be installed via the alternative app store F-Droid and used without any Google services.

In December 2022, Threema celebrated a special birthday: ten years ago, on December 12, 2012, the first version of the Threema app was released in Apple's App Store.

Shortly before the year comes to an end, Threema strengthens its security further with the new communication protocol "lbex," and the protocol portfolio is extended with new components for end-to-end encrypted group calls and the upcoming multi-device solution.

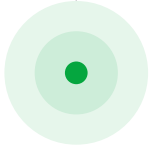


In 2023,

German researchers provided a formal security proof of the new communication protocol, "lbex," confirming that Threema's security is based on a rock-solid foundation.

In the same year, group calls were introduced, allowing all Threema users to conduct end-to-end encrypted voice and video calls in group chats.

Despite the general trend of abandoning cash in favor of electronic payment methods, Threema's Android app could now be purchased completely anonymously with cash. In addition, a partner program was launched to ensure the availability of Threema Work around the globe and provide first-hand support via local service providers.



Currently,

there are more than 12 million Threema users. As of March 2024, more than three million of them – spanning across 8,000 organizations, including public authorities and schools – use the business solution Threema Work.