

The Real Issue with Cell Phone Carriers and Text Message Censorship

February 25, 2022 - We've published a number of pieces about T-Mobile and other carriers now censoring some text messages. Specifically, they are refusing to send text message which link to certain websites... mostly of a conservative nature. But regardless of your politics, this trend can't be allowed to continue for one simple reason. It is a complete violation of privacy rights. The fact that cellular carriers can stop messages containing links they don't like means one thing. They are screening your text messages. And if they can screen for links, they can also screen for other content they don't approve of. This means that depending upon which way the political or social wind is blowing at any particular moment, anyone can be censored and nothing is private. Somebody needs to sue them over this.

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(function() {  
var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];  
  
s.type = 'text/javascript';  
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';  
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);  
})();
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(function() {  
var po = document.createElement('script'); po.type = 'text/javascript'; po.async = true;  
po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';  
var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);  
})();
```

The issues with T-Mobile came to light a couple of months ago when readers of the Gateway Pundit website noticed that text messages with Gateway Pundit links weren't getting through. Many of them wrote to the publication to let them know, and it was only then that a pattern emerged. T-Mobile customers around the country weren't being allowed by the carrier to send texts with Gateway Pundit links.

Regardless of the bad publicity, T-Mobile apparently hasn't changed their stance. If anything, they appear to have expanded it. There are now complaints that they are censoring content having to do with COVID treatment protocols and links to such information they deem to be inappropriate.

If this behavior was limited to a single company, you could easily change service providers to avoid the issue. But that doesn't appear to be the case. When the initial reports of text censorship came to light, it wasn't long before Verizon users were lodging similar complaints. Other carriers are also likely to be involved, and since all of the prepaid cellular providers are simply resellers of the major networks, virtually every cellular customer in the United States isn't safe from this type of monitoring.

And the only way for users of text messaging to know if they are being censored is to follow up with a voice conversation with the people they are sending text messages to. That's because the text messages being sent appear to go out normally. The cellular companies haven't even been courteous enough to notify their customers that their messages will never be delivered or to tell intended recipients of the messages that a message was sent, but not delivered. It's ridiculous.

If you want to avoid this issue, your only option appears to be to use some sort of encrypted messenger such as

Telegram. The cellular carriers can't screen these messages. The downside here is that both the sender and the recipient need to be using the same encrypted messaging app for this to work. But if the cellular carriers keep this up, they are going to destroy their own text messaging platforms and force users to migrate. Having a third party - like T-Mobile - screen my messages for their content is simply unacceptable to me. So I'm already telling many of the people that I deal with that they need to get Telegram, and I'm sure that I'm not the only person out there doing this.

by Jim Malmberg

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