

Apple threatens to stop iMessage and FaceTime services in the UK

Apple has threatened to phase out popular online communication services, including iMessage and FaceTime.

Apple has threatened to remove popular online communication services, including iMessage and FaceTime, from the UK market in the event that the government decides to implement planned amendments to the Investigative Powers Act (IPA), which it said could force the company to cut back on the security of the services.

Accordingly, the IPA amendment bill is expected to add a provision that allows the UK Home Office to have the right to search and access end-to-end encrypted content without prior notice. In addition, tech companies will be required to provide the Home Office with any security features and get them approved before releasing them to the public. If state regulators "don't like" a particular feature, they can force businesses to disable that feature immediately without notifying the public. These are things that clearly Apple has a hard time accepting.

According to a report from the BBC, the UK Home Office already has these powers, but needs to be re-evaluated and possibly an independent monitoring process. In addition, technology companies also have the right to file complaints before any changes they consider unreasonable.



Apple argues that the UK government request is giving the Home Secretary the power to control security and encryption updates on its products. The Cupertino company laid out its objections to the British government's bill in a nine-page document, saying it would not compromise on claims that would undermine the security of its products and infringe on users' rights. That is also why Apple is willing to withdraw services from the UK

market instead of accepting new regulations from the government.

If the law is passed, it will be interesting to see if Apple actually follows through on its threat to withdraw from the UK. iMessage has long been a soft power tactic that Apple uses to influence in many ways, even beyond technology.

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