Chapter 4
Digital Data Security Strategies in the COVID–19 Pandemic Period:
An Evaluation of Domestic Messaging Applications

Serkan Karatay

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8637-1915

Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, Turkey

Başak Gezmen

Istanbul Medipol University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

It can be said that the COVID-19 pandemic has an important role in the spread of personal and institutional use of digital communication channels. These developments, which further increase the importance of digital data security, can also be evaluated in terms of messaging applications, which is one of the most used digital communication channels. Digital data security, which has become more and more important with the spread of communication technologies, covers not only privacy and security problems arising from personal use, but also privacy and security problems arising from corporate use, which can also have national security characteristics. These problems may include political, economic, and military dimensions. In this study, messaging applications as digital communication channels are discussed in the context of digital data security strategies. The study aims to question the contributions of nationalization in digital communication channels to data security in messaging applications.

INTRODUCTION

The spread of digital communication technologies and the realization of many remote activities through digital channels during the Covid-19 pandemic have caused these technologies to penetrate all areas of societies and states. The increasing demand for digital platforms during the COVID-19 period, which also influences the lifestyles of societies, has rendered discussions on data security more meaningful in various dimensions (Nikiforova, 2023: 3). Digital communication technologies, which make all types of communication independent from time and space, have caused the issue of security of communication, coordination and sharing to come to the fore. Within the scope of this subject, which is in the field of digital data security, the risks involved in personal and corporate digital communication, the dimensions of the risks and the measures taken against these risks are discussed. Risks in digital communication, on the other hand, can go beyond the personal level and can be inclusive enough to concern a government agency or government. For this reason, the security of data that emerges during digital communication and which is open to monitoring and collection is important for states as well as individuals.

Data collected without permission from individuals and institutions and which can be used against individuals by being observed; it can be obtained through various intermediaries, from social media applications to Internet cookies, from speech and voice recordings to special applications developed to collect sensitive information. For personal users, this data, which is often used to show them more and effective advertisements, can sometimes turn into problems that seriously threaten people's safety. Digital data security, which can also be a national security feature for state institutions, politicians, military and law enforcement, gains a special importance in this direction and plays an important role in determining the digital policies of states. These policies, including the national dimension of data security, include having a domestic digital infrastructure and following innovations in all technological fields, especially Internet technology, and taking domestic initiatives. Among these policies, which encompass the national dimension of data security, can be counted the possession of a domestic digital infrastructure, the pursuit of innovations in all technological fields, particularly internet technology, and engagement in local initiatives to ensure digital data security without violating individuals' fundamental rights.

The concentration of technological ownership in the hands of certain states within the economic and technological hierarchy of international power has always been a risk factor for other states. This risk factor also applies to Internet technology and applications that have emerged within this technology. Indeed, 21st-century capitalism views data as a kind of raw material and is focused on its extraction and utilization (Srnicek, 2017: 22). Therefore, being dependent on internet technologies implies not only a significant economic opportunity being ceded but also the potential for foreign companies to collect, process, and sell the data of individuals, organizations, law enforcement agencies, and the state. Because being foreign-dependent in Internet technologies means that, besides the transferring an important economic opportunity, all kinds of data of individuals, institutions, law enforcement and the state can be collected, processed and sold by foreign companies. In addition to the collected and processed data, the implementation of necessary sanctions may be disrupted in various ways in the event that some practices contrary to national law occur on the Internet.

These risks and problems have strengthened the idea of nationalization in digital communication technologies. The Republic of Türkiye Digital Transformation Office also hosts and encourages domestic initiatives in the field of telecommunications, especially internet technologies. The office, which is working on ensuring digital data security with national means, also works to produce local solutions to problems that may arise through internet technologies.

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