

PAVEL DUROV INTERVIEW WITH TUCKER CARLSON

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Telegram is one of the fastest growing and biggest social messaging apps text apps in the world popular all around the world including in the United States but almost nothing or very little seems to be known about the company it's headquartered in Dubai where we are now it is run and owned and the software is designed written by Pavo dorov who began it some years ago who almost never does interviews it turns out he's in a very interesting person extremely interesting person we learned that the

other day while talking to him
and he has agreed to sit down
and tell us about himself and
his company and we thought
it'd be definitely worth
hearing and with that Pao
thank you for joining us well
thank you for having me so
um I confess I used telegram I
didn't know anything about
you or the company and I was
just kind of amazed by your
story and if you wouldn't
mind just recreating a little bit
um for our audience where
are you from how did you
start this and why uh that will
be a long story that's okay uh

I was born in 1984 in the Soviet Union so it was a fun year to be born in and uh back then I could witness you know the deficiencies of the centralized system we had in the Soviet Union when I was four years old my family moved to Italy where I could compare what I saw in tourin Italy with what I experienced in the Soviet Union and I thought the capitalist system the free market system is definitely better at least for me um and uh I went to school in Italy I uh became sort of a part of the um

European as a result but then when the Soviet Union collapsed we decided to move back to Russia uh in Italy though we me and my brother we had a lot of fun time uh he was shown live on Italian TV as a young Prodigy kid who could Sol cubic equations in uh real time uh being just you know 10 years old and that was considered to be impossible back then in Italy I don't know what a cubic equation is so yeah it sounds difficult definitely and you know when I first went to school in it I didn't know how

to speak Italian I didn't know a single Italian word and a lot of teachers said this guy well this kid will not going to be successful in our school by the end of the first year was second best by the end of the uh next year I was the best student in our class so it also showed me that well you could Excel you could compete I like that in competitive environment and then when we got back to Russia it was a little bit chaotic the only reason we got back is my father got uh an offer to run one of the

departments in the St
Petersburg State University
he's one of the uh famous
Scholars and writers uh uh
dealing with ancient Roman
literature and uh that
experience was very different
and uh I still enjoyed it
because in Russia in the '90s
you had this experimental
schools where uh you were
taught everything like we had
six foreign languages we had
math like very specialized six
foreign languages at once six
foreign languages in parallel
you would have math similar
that you would have in

specialist math schools and like chemistry at the same level you would have schools specialized in chemistry and biology so that was really intense uh my brother he became world champion in maths in international olympiads in maths and programming many times in a row uh absolute best myself I was just the best student at my school also did uh some victories in local competitions in several areas but we both were very passionate about coding and uh designing stuff and uh we because we

brought this IBM uh PC XT computer from Italy back in the early 90s we were one of the few families in Russia who could actually uh teach ourselves how to program and uh we started to do that I was uh in the University I was building website for my fellow students and uh as a result you know I started a company that became what they call the Facebook of Russia we don't like to name it that way because uh we actually managed to do a lot of things before Facebook and that defined how the

social media uh industry
developed in the years to
come the company's name
was VK I started it with I was
21 years old I just graduated
University and uh it
eventually became the largest
social network the most
popular social network in
Russia Ukraine B Russia
Kazakhstan and a bunch of
other post Soviet countries uh
that was an significant effort
on my side because I at a
certain point was the sole
employee of the company I
would write the code myself I
would do the design myself

myself I would uh manage the servers myself it was quite intense I even responded to customer support requests uh barely slapped but that was a fun time when I was 21 22 years old um and then the company grew like I said to somewhere about 100 million active users which was a lot back then it's uh was I think 201 uh 12 or 2011 when we fa this the our first issues in Russia because you see I was still a big believer in this values of free market freedoms freedom of speech freedom of assembly so when

the Russian opposition started to use VK to organize large protests in Russia where like almost half a million people will would go and protest on the main square or some of the main squares of the city uh we were requ requested to ban these communities on BK by the government and uh I refused so the government asked you to shut down Communications between their opponents well BK is a social networking platform so they have this large public communities that anybody can join anybody can read

what people are discussing or
what the administrators are
posting they can comment
they can share so it was a tool
for these protesters to
organize themselves back
then it wasn't about us you
know siding with with one
side with one part of the uh
political uh fight or the other
it was us defending the
freedom of speech and the
freedom of assembly which
we believed was the right
thing but that didn't go too
well with with the
government and uh they were
not too happy about that I

would say and uh in a few years from then in 20 13 we had a similar situation where uh you know you had this protests in Ukraine where people again would use VK to organize themselves and go to the main square of the city and uh show their disagreement with the government yes and we received a request SL demand from the Russian side saying you have to give us the private data of the organiz of this protest and our response was wait wait a minute this is a different country we won't

betray our Ukrainian users because you asked us to do that we decided to refuse and uh that didn't go too well with the Russian government as well so at the end of that year I had to make a difficult decision because I was offered basically a a choice between two suboptimal options uh one of which was uh I would start complying to whatever know the leaders of the country told me to do it the other one was I could um sell my stake in the company retire resign as the CEO and leave the country um I chose

the letter uh that's a it's a if I
can just ask you to pause it it's
a little strange because I have
heard people say that
telegram is a part of the
Russian government and
you're describing the opposite
you're saying you had to leave
the country because you
wouldn't bow to their
demands well that exactly
like you're saying people who
have very limited knowledge
of where telegram came from
they would make these claims
they could be encouraged by
our competitors who see it is
an easy way to discredit us

because you know telegram is spreading like forest fire two and a half million users sign up every day and we're sort of a threat so I'm not surprised there's this perception because our competitors they spend tens of billions on marketing and they're known for using PR firms to also engage in campaigns like that so how do you how much do you spend on marketing zero zero dollars in dollars zero dollars we've never spent anything on acquiring users for marketing purposes we never promoted telegram uh you know on

other social Platforms in any way uh this is very different from other apps you could see them being promoted here or there t is different all of our growth is purely organic and uh we got to almost 900 million users uh without uh having to spend anything on ads to promote teleg amazing I'm I'm sorry to interrupt your no it's just it's just interesting because I have heard people say that um but it sounds like the opposite of the truth so you decided to sell the company resign as CEO and leave your country yes that's

what I did it was a bit painful because obviously my first company was my baby I created my stuff there was a lot of creativity time and effort invested in that platform but at the same time uh you know I understood that i' would rather be free I would want to take orders from anyone and uh I left behind probably a comfortable life uh but for me it was never about you know becoming rich for me everything in my life was about becoming free yes and to the extent it is possible my

mission in life was to allow other people to also become free in a sense and using the platforms that we create or I created uh My Hope was that they could express their freedoms this is the mission of telegram and it was also in part the mission of my previous company BK we wanted to pause this interview just for a minute to point something out when the Russian government asked pav durov to use his social media company to censor its political opponents he refused he said he would rather resign

and leave the country where he was born then participate in something like that such was his commitment to free speech now you got to compare that what he did what pav durov did to what Mark Zuckerberg did or Prague agarwall the guy who ran Twitter before Elon Musk bought it both of them have collaborated with governments to censor people and that's shameful so we believe pavle when he says that his his app telegram will be a Bastion of free speech because it has been we

believe him cuz he's shown how committed to that he is so we've decided that we're going to launch with pride our own telegram channel to give one more Avenue to reach people with our content free from censorship so if you're on telegram we ask that you would subscribe to our new channel for by searching for a username listed below we're honored uh to be doing this we're going to get back to our conversation with Pablo durov so you start telegram after you leave Russia correct yeah so the idea for telegram

came with when we were still based in Russia because at some point we had this uh very stressful situation where armed policemen would come to my house try to break in because I refused to take down this uh opposition groups that I mentioned earlier and I realized there is no secure means of communication I realized I want to tell my brother what's going on to coordinate whatever we want to do and the every tool to communicate I could use was not really secure not

encrypted uh it was not safe
to use them so I thought hm it
could be a good idea to
actually come up with a know
a decently crypted
messaging app uh and my
brother being the genius that
he is he was able to create this
encryption standard that we're
using up until this day with
minor changes uh but the IDE
your brother wrote the
encryption yes well my
brother like two phds in
maths super smart he could
you know he's he's an expert
in cryptography uh he
designed uh the basic

principles of the telegram's encryption I was more on the user interface side the way how the app works the features Etc he was responsible for it for the encryption side so where did you go when you left Russia we tried several places we first went to Berlin we tried to set up a company in Berlin we then tried London Singapore San Francisco you name it we've we've been everywhere and uh why didn't you stay in any of those places oh because the bureaucratic hurdles were just

uh too difficult to overcome
you know I was bringing the
best inclass programmers in
the world to these places and
I was trying to hire them uh
from a local company and the
response I got in places like
Germany for example is that
no no no you can't hire people
from outside of the European
Union because you should
first run some newspaper ad
in the local uh magazine
whatever and then for for six
months nobody responds
from engineers that are
available inside the European
Union and Germany then

you're allowed kind of to hire
Outsiders and I thought it was
a crazy idea because why
didn't you just say they were
illiterate refugees well
because we didn't consider
ourselves refu we were you
know very successful people
we could have gone anywhere
I know but if you told them
you were illiterate refugees
they would let you stay yeah
so you so you go from
Germany to Singapore to
London to San Francisco
what happened in San
Francisco well in San
Francisco we really thought

that would be the place for us to be in because all the tech companies are there or around San Francisco and uh there were two things that happened that uh made us uh think twice uh well one thing is pretty obvious uh I was in San Francisco I got attacked on the street after visiting uh I think it was Jack dorsy uh in Twitter in the Twitter's office and uh I was walking back at 8:00 p.m. to my hotel and I got attacked in the street uh this is the only country where I got attacked in the streets what what happened just

three big guys tried to grab my phone from my hands I was tweeting uh about the fact that I just met uh the founder of Twitter that seemed right like a right idea for me back then uh to do and uh I got attacked uh I didn't want to let them have my phone um they probably didn't expect uh resistance so I snatched my phone back there was a short fight with the guys there was a little bit blood involved but I managed to run away uh and decided I should probably they probably don't mug a lot

of Russians they might have
been surprised well there
were much taller than me I
must admit and there are three
of them but uh I think I put up
a good fight were you
surprised did this happened in
San Francisco completely
yeah it was it was a shock to
me because I I traveled a lot
that was the first uh place I I
got attacked and I thought all
right maybe we shouldn't uh
look at San Francisco maybe
there are other places in
America where where you
don't get attacked yeah
exactly uh but you know there

there's this second part which was probably more alarming there in the US we got too much attention from the the FBI the security agencies wherever we came to the US so to give you an example last time I was in the US I brought an engineer that is working for telegram and there was an attempt to secretly hire my engineer behind my back by cyber security off officers or agents whatever they are called the US government should to hire your engineer that's my understanding that's what he told me to write code

for them or to break into telegram they were curious to learn which open-source libraries are integrated to the telegram's app you know on the client's side and they were trying to persuade him to use certain open-source tools that he would then integrate into the telegram's code that in my understanding would serve as back doors would allow the US government to spy on people who use telegram the US government or maybe any other government because a back door is a back door regardless of who is using it

that's right and and and you're
that's a little surprising to hear
maybe it's not surprising it's
it's offensive you're confident
that happened yes there is no
reason for my engineer to
make up the stories also
because I personally
experienced similar pressure
in the US whenever I would
go to the US I would have
two FBI agents greeting me at
the airport asking questions
one time I was uh having my
breakfast like 9:00 a.m. and
uh the FBI showed up my
house that I was renting and
uh that was quite surprising

and I thought you know we're getting too much attention here uh it's probably not the best environment to run why would the had you committed a crime no they were interested to learn more about telegram they knew I you know left Russia they they knew what we were doing but they wanted details and my understanding is that they wanted to establish a relationship to in a way control telegram better I'm I I understand they were doing their job it's just that for us running a privacy focused

social media platform that probably wasn't the best environment to be and we want to be focused on what we do not on uh government relations of that sort the government relations um so then you came to UAE to Dubai yes seven years ago we uh moved here we first wanted just to try it for half a year see if it works out and it turned out to be a great place we never looked back and we never wanted to change thee for any other place after that why well for a number of reasons first the ease of doing

business here is uh so high for example you can hire people from anywhere in the world as long as you're paying them a good salary the residence permits they granted automatically it's very different if you try to do that in Europe in some other countries it's very different from them second it's very tax efficient uh third uh the infrastructure is great you get a lot for uh the minimum amount of taxes you're paying the the the the roads the airports the hotels the everything I think you

witnessed it yourself yes but I think more importantly is that it's a neutral place it's a neutral country it's a small country that wants to be friends with friend with everybody uh it's not aligned geopolitically with any of the big superpowers and I think it's uh the best place for a neutral platform like ours to be in if we want to make sure we can defend our users privacy and freedom of speech so in the time that you've been here there have been a number of wars and threats of War precursors to

war um have you had any pressure from the government here honestly any pressure from the government here um to reveal a back door into telegram or to ban anyone or to make any changes to your business zero that's the best part for all the seven years we've been here there's there's been zero pressure coming from the eue towards telegram they've been very supportive very helpful and it's a big contrast from you know whatever we've experienced before um what about what you've

experienced since since you moved here in those seven years have you come under pressure from other governments under whose jurisdiction you don't fall but to to accommodate their demands well of course well telegram is is a large platform we are popular in many many countries and uh we we've uh been uh receiving a lot of requests demands some of them were legit legitimate like if uh there was a group of people who was promoting violence there was some terrorist activity that was uh

you know spreading violence
in some parts of the world
publicly uh posting uh things
that any decent human being
would disallow or wouldn't
want to be posted we would
help them but in some other
cases where we thought it
would be crossing the line it
wouldn't be uh you know in
line with our values of
freedom of speech and and
protecting people's private
correspondence we would
ignore can can you give us an
example of a request that you
thought crossed into
censorship and and spying

violating people's privacy
well there's a I would say a
very funny story related to
your home country um after
the events of January the 6th
uh we received a letter from I
I believe uh Congressman of
the democratic side um and
uh they requested that we
would share all the data we
had in relation to what they
called this you Uprising or
um and we checked it with
our lawyers and they said you
better ignore it but the letter
seemed very serious uh and
the letter said you know if
you're fail to comply with this

request you will be in violation with know the US Constitution or something uh so they wanted data on people who voted for the other guy in the election but they wanted the data of people yeah who were demonstrating in Washington or wherever they were doing uh they Pro you're probably right they were I'm not an expert in the politics uh What uh what funny about that is two years exactly two sorry two weeks after that letter we got another letter a new letter from the Republican side of the

Congress and there we read that if we give out any data according to the previous request we would be in violation of the US

Constitution so we got two letters that said whatever we do would be violating the US Constitution in a way that was my understanding of this letters uh from the same legislative body both from the US Congress yes so how do you respond to that well the same way we respond to most such requests we decided to ignore them because it's such a complicated matter related

to internal politics in the US
we don't want to take any if
you I believe this strongly if
you ignore your problems
most of them do go away it's
very true it is very no it says
it but it's true um that's

amazing

have you ever had demands
that you can't ignore well it it
depends unreasonable
demands so I would say the
largest pressure towards
telegram is not coming from
governments uh it's coming
from Apple and Google huh
so when it comes to freedom
of speech those two platforms

they could basically censor
whatever is you can read
access on your smartphones
so I mean do you run the risk
of being thrown out of their
stores exactly that's what they
make very clear that if we fail
to comply with the guidelines
so they call it uh telr could be
removed from the stores well
that would be not a small
thing for you right well it's
not W be a small thing for us
because obviously a big
chunk of the world population
will lose access to available
tool that they're using every
day but you know it will not

also be a small thing for them

I mean there should I I believe there there must be find some compromise in such cases but Apple and Google are not very compromising when it comes to the guidelin if they believe some content is against their rules they will see to it that all the apps that are distributed through their uh stores comply with these rules are any of those rules or do you interpret any of those rules do you believe any of them to be political in nature some of them but it's not the rules it's

the application of the rules the rules themselves they're pretty General right so there must be no violence discrimination public uh publicly available I don't know child abuse materials it's hard to disagree with that yes uh but then when they start to apply those rules sometimes we are not agreeing with with their interpretations and we try to uh you get back to Apple or Google whoever it is and say look we think you got it wrong we think actually this is legitimate way of people expressing their opinions and

sometimes they do agree to their credit sometimes they disagree and we still have to take some content down at least in the version of telegram that it distributed through that platforms so there are a bunch of a number of conflicts going on around the world right now and that may accelerate so would you expect that the number of Demands and the intensity of those demands the Persistence of those demands would increase as the wars become more intense let's see I'm really hopeful that the past is

is behind us I want to be optimistic um I think now we reached a point where uh politicians and societies know what to expect from social media platforms and where there uh you know the red lines are yes uh we also learned much more about the requirements coming from both them and Google slapple so and our users get better educated as well what what is allowed it was not allowed so I don't necessarily believe that things are going to get worse it does seem like the red line for for governments is

allowing organized
opposition to their rule that's
what you saw in Russia with
nval and and the Ukraine
crisis in 2014 that's what you
saw from that Democratic
member of Congress after
January 6th 2020 definitely
there's a p pattern here
telgram has been used by
protesters in places like Hong
Kong yes barus Kazakhstan
even in Barcelona back in the
day yes so it's it's it's been a
tool for Theos to a large
extent but it doesn't really
matter whether it's opposition
or the ruling party that is

using tou for us we apply the
rules equally to all sides we
don't uh become
prejudiced in this way it's not
that we are rooting for the
opposition or We are rooting
for the ruling party of it's not
that we don't care but we
think it's important to uh have
this platform that is neutral to
all voices because we believe
that the competition of
different ideas can result in
progress and a better world
for everyone that's um in start
contrast to say Facebook
which has said in public you
know we tip the scale in favor

of this or that movement and
this or that country all far
from the west and far from
Western media attention but
they've said that what do you
think of that tech companies
choosing governments well I
think that's one of the reasons
why we ended up here in the
UAE out of all places right so
you you don't want to be
geopolitically aligned you
don't want to select the
winners in any of this uh
political fights and that's why
you have to be in a neutral
place but I think Facebook in
particular has uh a lot of uh

reasons apart from being based in the US for doing what they're doing uh I I think every app and platform plays its own role and we believe that Humanity does need a neutral platform like telegram uh that would be respectful to people's privacy and freedoms maybe the mo from a political perspective it seems like the most provocative thing telegram does is offer something called channels which seem sort of readymade for organizing groups of people can you explain to viewers who aren't

familiar with them what a telegram channel is yes so telegram channel is a one to many broadcast tool that allows people to uh quickly disseminate any message to millions of people so there's a Channel people subscribe to it it's a one-way communication meaning a channel can be used by say a president or a head of state and uh everybody else will not be able to send a message to the president but the president will be able to send a message to all of the people who subscribe to his channel yes

or her channel so the point here is uh channels are so easy to use and they're so deeply integrated in the messaging user interface that they became extremely popular so you receive it like a text exactly so it's it's a very familiar form for a lot of people and since we launched launch channels 8 years ago I believe uh a few other apps popular apps followed in our footsteps and copied that feature as well not nearly as advanced as we have but it shows that it's a really uh high quality and demanded feature

that the world needs I think
it's and you don't have to
answer any of these questions
if you don't want if it's too
personal but um you're the
owner you you own it and it's
very unusual in fact I've never
seen it um to have a large
business like this owned by
one person why didn't you
take and you could have
cashed in on private Equity
money along the way but you
didn't why didn't you well
that's true as of now till was
100% owned by myself
which is like I said quite uh
unusual I've never heard of

that before the the reason I
tried to you know stay away
from Ben Capital money at
least the early stages of our
development is because we
wanted to be independent we
knew that our mission and our
goals not necessarily
consistent with the goals of
uh funds that could be
investing into us and also for
me it was never about money
right so I have a few hundred
million dollars in my bank
account or in Bitcoin since 10
years ago
and uh I don't do anything
anything with it I don't own

any like real estate Jets or Yachts I don't think those uh this lifestyle is for me I like to focus on what we are doing uh with Tel you don't own anything like big assets You Don't Own no big assets an island in Hawaii or no no no no land no real estate nothing why well because for me my number number one priority in life is my freedom and once you start buying things first it will tie you down to a physical location in my view it's my personal view I don't have nothing against people who are buying real estate but

in my personal view it would be like this for me and the second reason is I like to stay focused on what we do at telegram so I know that if I buy a house I I buy a jet something like that I would be spending time on trying to make it nice and yeah this will require a lot of time and effort would you go with leather seats or velvet seats exactly and you're not even going to choose yes for me I would rather make decisions that would influence how a billion people communicate rather than choosing the color

of seats in the house that only
I and my relatives probably
bunch of my friends will see
interesting and you didn't take
cuz I I just want I just have to
say it a third time haven't seen
this before you obviously
were famous as a young man
as a company Builder and
entrepreneur and so you could
have really taken a lot of
money and you didn't because
you didn't want to be
controlled I just didn't see any
reason to do that you know I
had enough money to get by
well to be completely Fair
tgram did takes outside

money we issued bonds 3 years ago so we rais debt uh and that was uh and and before that we had a cryptocurrency project that also raised some funds so there were instances where we raised outside uh funding but uh when it comes to company's Equity yeah you didn't give up ownership we didn't give anyone ownership or voting control or anything like that because we also believe in efficiency I think that having my myself as the sole owner director and product manager for this uh

extensive period of time and the company's development allowed us to move faster and be how could you be the only product manager are you still the only product manager in the company exactly I still come up with all most of the features uh I still work directly with every engineer every designer who is implementing these features um you know I'm running this company because I enjoy it I'm the only product manager because I think this is the way I can contribute how big is your HR department zero

well you could say it's me and
because the way we are
engineer no no you need a big
HR department you don't
think you don't Suffer
Without one we in a way
decentralized that we started a
platform where we host
contests for engine Engineers
it's actually contest.com we
have the separate uh platform
for that and we select the best
of the best Engineers as a
result of the competitions that
we organize we hold them
every like month or two
months so after a series of
these competitions we select

the best of the best of the best
and they then maybe could
join our team which is just
about 30 Engineers so it's it's
really compact the team super
efficient it's like a Navy
sealed team and uh uh this is
how we operate we don't need
HR department to find uh
super talented Engineers why
doesn't everyone do this I
look at some of these tech
companies or Elon Musk
famously when he showed up
at Twitter I mean there were
people doing things that he
didn't even know what they
were doing and they didn't

know what they were doing
they were like there was a
World Peace Department and
a foosball Department and
why doesn't everybody run
their business like you well
it's an interesting question I
think it all boils down to the
question of uh Independence
anyway I asked this question
to the predecessors of el Jack
dorsy Jack and um um and
the

his predecessor as well and uh
what you say dick cost I his
name and uh this Jack he told
me that uh if I told him look
you can run this company

with 20 people you don't need so many people here and the response was I agree with you but if we start firing so many people it will make the Wall Street scared they will think something's very wrong with the company and we don't want to do that and that's why we got to keep all this uh employees around so to keep the stock price high he had to run it inefficiently I mean that's what you're saying if I understood him correctly that's what what but to to his to his credit El has to take Twitter private before he

could do all theorization
there's I mean there's
something sort of profound in
what you're saying I mean the
whole point of a publicly
traded company or one of the
points so the public can
participate in the ownership
of the company but also so
Outsiders can assess the
operations of the company
and so there transparencies
we know how the company is
run because it's owned by the
public and so it would be by
definition more efficient you
would think but you're saying
that it's wildly less efficient

that you wind up with a foosball department when it's publicly traded but when it's privately held you don't I mean that's kind of the opposite of what you would think right well I guess most tech Founders would actually agree that running a public company is uh less efficient than running a private company because you have to be accountable to much more people there's a lot of redundancy bureaucracy involved so from a purely like efficiency standpoint I would argue and I think a lot of

people would agree with me that we as a public company is suboptimal however there are other advantages of of uh getting listed and of course that is relevant when you want to acquire other companies cash right yes you can have access to cheap Capital you know there's a lot of things you can do but you don't want to do any of those things well not not presently definitely I am enjoying running my company in The Way It Is Well who knows what the future holds but uh as of now I think we are

doing a great job with uh with telegram 900 million users will probably cross a billion uh monthly active users within a year from now I think we're doing great why would we lose this momentum right now can I just go back to something you said the at the outset you don't have an HR department you only have 30 Engineers working for you you run the products you own the company such a tight organization but how do you get new users if you spend zero money for Acquisitions

if you're not advertising if
you're not paying to bring
people in how do you how do
you do that how do you get to
a billion for free because
people love our product what
we realized pretty early on is
that people are smart people
like to use good things and
they don't like to use inferior
things that's why whenever
you have a person who who
started to use Telegram and
they're there for a while and
they start to discover all the
features all their uh you know
the speed the security the pro
everything that we have uh

they don't want want to go back and they start inviting their friends recommending them you should really check this app out because it's so much better than everything else also because people realize that whatever uh messaging apps they're using right now they're like five six years behind They're copying what we did six years ago and that's not a you know very high quality copy that they make of our features so people love quality that's why they move they also love the independent they also love

the
Privacy they love the freedom
there are a lot of reasons why
somebody would switch to
telegram from other apps so
one of the things we learned
when Elon Musk bought
Twitter is that the Intel
agencies not just us but a
bunch of other countries The
Usual Suspects um were all
over the company I mean they
were some of them were
present working at the
company they had access to
the direct messages you can
just imagine well you know
because you run one but the

wealth of data flowing
through would be of great
interest to governments
does that make you paranoid
that you'll be penetrated I
mean I assume governments
would like to know what's
going on sort of privately on
telegram well there's
definitely a lot of
responsibility that we have on
our shoulders and we I
wouldn't say we are paranoid
but I think it makes sense to
stay prudent and uh you know
not being uh too accessible
not traveling to weird places
you don't travel to weird

places I hope not like I travel
to places where I have uh
confidence that you know
those places are uh consistent
with what we do in our values
I don't go to any of the big
geopolitical powers of the
countries like China or Russia
or the US so uh you don't go
to the US I try not to I can go
but you know it's uh too much
attention like I described
before yeah because at some
point if you run something
like this you're a player in
World politics I mean by Def
whether you want to be or not
don't you think we definitely

don't want to be a player we
want to be a neutral platform
that is impartial and you
know

doesn't take any side but
you're probably right there's
some role we have to play
well not taking aside is the
one thing you're not allowed
to do right right I mean aren't
you required to take aide in
the modern world I think
that's a big problem because I
think that kind of um attitude
can result in our world
becoming a more dangerous
place because at the end of
the day we all have to try to

understand each other and try to get closer to each other in terms of getting to know the positions of the other people even those they're drastically different from our own positions and that's how we get to some compromise and and move forward if we're strictly divided and everybody is required to take a side and we can't take a side because we are this platform that people should use to collaborate and to find common ground and hopefully to move forward if we lose that we can end up in

a much more dangerous place
how often do you intersect
with the National Security
Agency NSA and I asked that
as someone whose texts were
read by them so I I I know
that they're very active in this
world um what's your
experience been well I think
the NSA is not uh an agency
that works with you directly
right I don't come and C
you're so diplomatic I love it
the N is not an agency that
works with you directly no
that is true that is true true so
my knowledge of my
interactions with the NSA is

very limited yes I could read something in the newspapers about you know my phone being penetrated with Pegasus or something like that I no idea whether it's true or not but this is the only source of information I can have about me personally being of interest to any of uh you know the secret agencies but you've got to think even though you haven't done an interview in seven years is uh you know you're it's it's widely known by people who are interested who you are in your role in this I mean

you've got to think you're
under just crazy amounts of
surveillance wouldn't you
think that's probably true you
know it would sound funny
but I assume by default that
the devices I use I are
compromised yes because
you

you you will still use an
iPhone or an Android phone
and uh now After
experiencing what I
experienced in the US I have
very limited faith in platforms
developed in the US from a
security standpoint yes
privacy standpoint exactly

yeah because in a lot of countries ours America included spying is described as quote security you're looking at it from the other perspective you're assuming that security is privacy and my right not to be spied upon but big governments describe spying upon you as security thank you for this correction um so last question do you since you've done this since you were in college and you've been at the center of it where do you see it going and by this I mean the free exchange the private

exchange of information
between Sovereign
individuals human beings
nonslaved when I was a child
that was possible it's
increasingly difficult are we
moving toward a world where
there just is no private
communication or do you
think that privacy will remain
despite say AI or just massive
increases in computing power
well this depends on the
extent of privacy uh when
you
say privacy will remain do
you mean that we have
absolute privacy now I don't

think that we do and I think the world is becoming less amenable government's becoming less tolerant of privacy it's clearly the trend because they have more technological power but will they win I guess will there ever be a way to preserve privacy you know can is there a place for it I believe in that I an optimist I think some new secure Hardware you know communication devices will be created uh in a similar way that now we have uh Hardware wallets to store your cryptocurrency yes

maybe we'll have secure communication devices you know to send messages or do voice calls it's possible uh I do believe that you know the world develops in cycles and uh if things seem to go in one direction today doesn't seem doesn't mean that tomorrow they will go the same direction I also feel that at some point people will get tired of uh what they experienc today and they would decide to you know move to some other direction so it's I I seen it after covid for example so during Co you

had a lot of restrictions also
on social media platforms you
most social media platforms
you were not really allowed
to

express doubt in relation to
lockdowns or vaccines or
masks and uh at some point I
could feel that the sentiment
changed people started to feel
very very tired and sometimes
angry with the fact that they
were not allowed to express
their opinions particularly
after the end of uh the
pandemic uh PE a lot of
people start started to be even
more skeptical about the

restrictions in their freedoms that they experienced during the pandemic what was your position as a business owner uh during covid did you must have come under pressure to censor opinions on lockdowns vaccines masking what how did you respond so our position is pretty straightforward we're a neutral platform we were helping governments to spread their message about the lockdowns and masks and accidents we had dozens of governments who we really helped uh you know de

simulate their information but we also didn't want to restrict the voices that were critical of all these measures we thought it made sense for this opposing views to collide and hopefully you know see some truth come out of those debates and of course we got critic for that but uh looking back I think it was the right strategy so you allowed people to voice doubts about the so-called science throughout the throughout the experience exactly during the pandemic we I think were one of the few or maybe the only

major social media platform
that didn't uh take down
accounts that were skeptical
uh in relation to some of these
measures so why why are you
not famous and treated as a
hero in the United States
shouldn't there be a parade in
your honor if you're the only
social media platform not to
take down what turned out to
be true or in some to some
extent true more certainly
more true than the CDC
guidance I mean why why
why weren't you times Man
of
the Year why isn't your face

on the nickel I'm not an
expert
in us politics but to to be fair
you have now uh Twitter or a
yeah that uh seemingly
becoming more Pro freedom
of speech uh and uh I think it
is it's it's it's it's a great
development and back to our
earlier discussion about how
all of this is developing in
Cycles things are starting to
change it seems so do you I
mean but in in some ways
Elon buying Twitter sort of
ends your Monopoly but you
still greet it cheerfully you're
still in favor of it definitely

we we love the fact that uh
Elan bought Twitter we
thought it was a great
development for a number of
reasons first reason is just
Innovation you could see ax
doing trying a lot of things
some of them will turn out to
be mistakes some of them
will
work but at least they're
trying
to innovate that's something
we didn't have outside of
telegram and a few other
companies in this industry for
the last 10 years what you
saw from the big players they

would rather copy The
Proven

models the features that apps
like telegram launch and just
scale them on a larger
audience this features would
be a pale will be pale pale
reflections of what we built
but this was the way those
companies operate still
operate what x is trying to do
is uh in line what we're
building you know Innovation
trying different things uh
trying to give power to the
creators uh trying to get the
ecosystem economy going
those are all exciting things

and uh I think we need more companies like that I was I don't know if it's good for Humanity that um like Y is spending so much time on Twitter making it better but it's definitely good for the social media industry when you see the other the guys who run these other companies like what do you do know them and do you ever talk about freedom of speech I mean if you're running you're running to Mark not you don't have to answer of course if you don't want but like if you're running

to Mark Zuckerberg yeah I
we
met with Mark more than 10
years ago I was still running
VK and I told them I told
Mark and his colleagues
about our uh app platform we
launched an app platform I
think it was 2009 at VK they
were very interested it was an
interesting meeting um they
ended up trying to copy not
what we did but what I told
them we did uh it was funny
um I remember him asking
whether we were planning to
uh start something on a global
uh basis on the global Lael

level like go uh for international expansion I said no and I asked him whether he was going to try to capture more of my domestic Market where I was working on and he said no and we both ended up doing exactly that in like two or three weeks that was so I'm thinking I shouldn't go into business with Mark Zuckerberg uh no comment pav J that thank you very much it a great conversation I appreciate and we're rooting for you thank you for having me of course free speech is bigger than any one person or

any one organization societies
are defined by what they will
not permit what we're
watching is the total inversion
of virtue hey it's Tucker
Carlson the internet is
crowded with interesting
things that don't really matter
on TCN we attempt to bring
you interesting things that
actually do matter and a lot of
them interviews long form
and short videos
documentaries you can find
all of it on tuckercarlson.com
and we hope you will.

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