Text message erasing application goes international

March 11 2010

The iPhone 3Gs at an Apple store in 2009. A California start-up on Thursday went international with a TigerText iPhone application that lets people kill embarrassing text messages after they have been sent out.

A California start-up on Thursday went international with a TigerText iPhone application that lets people kill embarrassing text messages after they have been sent out.

X Sigma Partners founder Jeffrey Evans said that massive interest in TigerText prompted the firm to speed up the release of versions for other countries as well as for BlackBerry smartphones.

"We've been getting email from people all around the world and our website has been hit much more than we ever imagined from international users," Evans told AFP.

English-language Tigertext applications for iPhones became available through Apple's online iTunes shop Thursday in Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Israel, and Canada.

"We were shocked at the number of requests for TigerText from mobile users overseas," said Evans.

While declining to reveal exact figures, Evans said that thousands of people have been signing up daily for TigerText since the service launched in the United States in February.

A test version crafted for newer model BlackBerry smartphones was released Thursday in the United States and Canada.

Tigertext.com is a text message trail-covering application. People receiving Tigertext messages are prompted to download the application for free in order to read the contents, which are not actually sent to the recipient's phone.

Instead, messages are hosted on the company's servers where they can be erased when senders wish.

Sent messages can be deleted on demand or be set to automatically vanish after a specified period. A "delete on read" feature starts a 60 second countdown when a text message is opened and then erases it at zero.

Evans said inspiration for the application came from years he spent working in job placement and seeing how extensively potential

employers mine the Internet for postings, comments or other insights regarding candidates.

"If you send a private text message it should stay private," Evans said. "I thought it would be great if messages would self-destruct in 60 seconds..."

"When the message is gone from us, it's gone," he added.

TigerText messages cannot be saved, copied or forwarded by recipients.

While reading messages is free, the service costs 1.99 dollars (US) per month for limitless messaging or 19.99 dollars for annual subscriptions to the service.

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Citation: Text message erasing application goes international (2010, March 11) retrieved 23 April 2024 from
https://phys.org/news/2010-03-text-message-erasing-application-international.html