

From: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#)
To: [Costello, Don CITZ:EX](#)
Cc: [Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX](#); [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: RE: RUSH - Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (Rep. Deadline: EOD Today)
Date: October 30, 2023 4:30:00 PM

Hi Don,

Just following up on the media request response. Are you able to advise on an ETA?

Thank you,

Farah Tarannum | Senior Public Affairs Officer

Government Communications and Public Engagement

Ministry of Citizens' Services

Mobile: (250) 883-2847 | **E-mail:** farah.tarannum@gov.bc.ca

From: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 3:23 PM
To: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: RUSH - Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (Rep. Deadline: EOD Today)

Thank you, I am working on the response now.

Don Costello | A/ Executive Director and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)
Enterprise Services | Office of the Chief Information Officer | Ministry of Citizens' Services
PO Box 9412, Stn Prov Gov, Victoria BC V8W 9V1
[250 589 2358](tel:2505892358)

From: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 3:13 PM
To: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RUSH - Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (Rep. Deadline: EOD Today)

Good afternoon Don,

We have a media request from Bob Mackin (highlighted below), for an EOD today response. Please advise on a response.

MEDIA REQUEST

Reporter

Bob Mackin, Reporter

The Breaker News

bob@thebreaker.news

604-982-9130 c: 604-724-5604

Deadline Monday, October 30, 2023, 4:00 PM

Request: "Hello. Will the B.C. government follow the lead of the federal government and ban the use of WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices?"

Please let me know if any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

Farah Tarannum | Senior Public Affairs Officer

Government Communications and Public Engagement

Ministry of Citizens' Services

Mobile: (250) 883-2847 | **E-mail:** farah.tarannum@gov.bc.ca

From: [Costello, Don CITZ:EX](#)
To: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: FW: RUSH - Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (Rep. Deadline: EOD Today)
Date: October 30, 2023 5:09:00 PM

Just in case...

Don Costello | A/ Executive Director and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)
Enterprise Services | Office of the Chief Information Officer | Ministry of Citizens' Services
PO Box 9412, Stn Prov Gov, Victoria BC V8W 9V1
[250 589 2358](tel:2505892358)

From: MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 5:03 PM
To: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: RUSH - Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (Rep. Deadline: EOD Today)

Approved

From: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 5:02 PM
To: MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>; Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: RUSH - Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (Rep. Deadline: EOD Today)

Sorry – this one.....

From: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 5:01 PM
To: MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>; Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: RUSH - Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (Rep. Deadline: EOD Today)

The BC Government is in alignment with the Federal Government's assessment of We Chat. The use of the We Chat application is banned on BC government managed devices.

Security is a top priority that we take very seriously. The BC Government does not use the Kaspersky application and it is not on any BC Government managed device.

From: [Brouwer, Shauna CITZ:EX](#)
To: [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#); [Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX](#)
Cc: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#); [Molyneux, Jennifer CITZ:EX](#); [Cook, Jeannette CITZ:EX](#)
Subject: Re: Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices
Date: October 30, 2023 6:20:59 PM

Looks good thx!

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 5:35:24 PM
To: Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>; Brouwer, Shauna CITZ:EX <Shauna.Brouwer@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; Molyneux, Jennifer CITZ:EX <Jennifer.Molyneux@gov.bc.ca>; Cook, Jeannette CITZ:EX <Jeannette.Cook@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Hi! Media response for review. Approved by Alex. Thanks!

MEDIA REQUEST

Reporter

Bob Mackin, Reporter
The Breaker News
bob@thebreaker.news
604-982-9130 c: 604-724-5604

Deadline ASAP

Request: Will the B.C. government follow the lead of the federal government and ban the use of WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices?

Recommendation (provide response from ministry)

- Security is a top priority that we take very seriously.
- The B.C. Government banned the use of WeChat on B.C. government-management devices in early 2020.
- The BC Government does not use the Kaspersky application and it is not on any BC Government managed device.

From: [Acton, Erin GCPE:EX](#)
To: [Berndt, Eric GCPE:EX](#); [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#)
Cc: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#); [Leslie, Lisa GCPE:EX](#); [Esplen, Shantel GCPE:EX](#); [Allison, Mike GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: Re: Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices
Date: October 31, 2023 10:50:30 AM

Hi Vivian,

- WeChat is an important tool to share information about government programs, services, and information with people in their preferred language.
- The Province uses a contractor to post information to that app on our behalf.

I've added Mike Allison from MUNI for his awareness.

Erin

From: "Berndt, Eric GCPE:EX" <Eric.Berndt@gov.bc.ca>
Date: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 at 9:49 AM
To: "Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX" <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: "Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX" <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>, "Leslie, Lisa GCPE:EX" <Lisa.Leslie@gov.bc.ca>, "Esplen, Shantel GCPE:EX" <Shantel.Esplen@gov.bc.ca>, "Acton, Erin GCPE:EX" <Erin.Acton@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

And now actually copying her

From: Berndt, Eric GCPE:EX
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 9:49 AM
To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; Leslie, Lisa GCPE:EX <Lisa.Leslie@gov.bc.ca>; Esplen, Shantel GCPE:EX <Shantel.Esplen@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Hi Viv,

Copying Erin Action on this one, we do use a contractor and will send back some lines asap.

Eric

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 9:46 AM
To: Berndt, Eric GCPE:EX <Eric.Berndt@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; Leslie, Lisa GCPE:EX <Lisa.Leslie@gov.bc.ca>; Esplen, Shantel GCPE:EX <Shantel.Esplen@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Hi! Can you provide advice on how to respond to the second part of his question? I think you use a contractor?

Thanks!

Reporter

Bob Mackin, Reporter
The Breaker News
bob@thebreaker.news
604-982-9130 c: 604-724-5604

Deadline ASAP**Request**

Is there any policy directive that you can send to me about the WeChat ban from early 2020?
I am aware the government does use WeChat to promote news releases.

Recommendation**Background**

This is a follow-up to a media request from October 30, 2023.

REQUEST:

FROM REPORTER: "Hello. Will the B.C. government follow the lead of the federal government and ban the use of WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices?"

RESPONSE:

Provided Background

since early 2020, WeChat has not been permitted on government managed devices and that the BC Government does not use the Kaspersky application and it is not on any BC Government managed device.

From: Pollard, Desmond CITZ:EX
To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX; Hannah, Jeff GCPE:EX; Toor, Arjin CITZ:EX; Mayer, Braeden CITZ:EX
Cc: Fernandes, Jennifer GCPE:EX; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX
Subject: RE: Media Request: The Breaker - WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices
Date: October 31, 2023 9:09:08 AM

Approved.

Thanks,
Desmond

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 8:20 AM
To: Pollard, Desmond CITZ:EX <Desmond.Pollard@gov.bc.ca>; Hannah, Jeff GCPE:EX <Jeff.Hannah@gov.bc.ca>; Toor, Arjin CITZ:EX <Arjin.Toor@gov.bc.ca>; Mayer, Braeden CITZ:EX <Braeden.Mayer@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Fernandes, Jennifer GCPE:EX <Jennifer.Fernandes@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Media Request: The Breaker - WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Here's the media response for review. Recommend sending from ministry.

Reporter

Bob Mackin, Reporter
The Breaker News
bob@thebreaker.news
604-982-9130 c: 604-724-5604

Deadline ASAP

Request: Will the B.C. government follow the lead of the federal government and ban the use of WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices?

Recommendation (provide response from ministry)

- Security is a top priority that we take very seriously.
- ~~The B.C. Government banned the use of WeChat on B.C. government management devices in early 2020.~~
- Since early 2020, WeChat has not been permitted on government managed devices.
- The BC Government does not use the Kaspersky application and it is not on any BC Government managed device.

From: [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#)
To: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: FW: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices
Date: November 6, 2023 10:21:26 AM

Can you send to CJ, then Shauna for approval.

Bob Mackin had a follow up question. He's looking for a copy of the specific directive from 2020 banning WeChat. s.13

s.13; s.15

Thanks,

Vivian

Original response:

- In early 2020, it was communicated by the office of the CISO to all security leads across all government ministries that WeChat was not permitted on government managed devices.
- Those security leads then ensured the application was uninstalled. The uninstalls were verified in reporting.
- The ministry continues to monitor applications for any potential cybersecurity risks that may be associated.

From: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#)
To: [Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX](#)
Cc: [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#); [Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX](#)
Subject: RE: For Approval - Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)
Date: November 6, 2023 10:30:00 AM

Thank you, CJ.

Kind regards,

Farah Tarannum | Senior Public Affairs Officer

Government Communications and Public Engagement

Ministry of Citizens' Services

Mobile: (250) 883-2847 | **E-mail:** farah.tarannum@gov.bc.ca

From: Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:30 AM
To: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX <CherrieLen.Garcia@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: For Approval - Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

This is done from my perspective

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:29:03 AM
To: Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX <CherrieLen.Garcia@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: For Approval - Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

Good morning CJ,

Bob Mackin had a follow up question. He's looking for a copy of the specific directive from 2020 banning WeChat.

s.13; s.15

Original response:

- In early 2020, it was communicated by the office of the CISO to all security leads across all government ministries that WeChat was not permitted on government managed devices.
- Those security leads then ensured the application was uninstalled. The uninstalls were verified in reporting.
- The ministry continues to monitor applications for any potential cybersecurity risks that may be associated.

Please advise if any questions or concerns. Reporter's deadline is ASAP.

Kind regards,

Farah Tarannum | Senior Public Affairs Officer

Government Communications and Public Engagement

Ministry of Citizens' Services

Mobile: (250) 883-2847 | **E-mail:** farah.tarannum@gov.bc.ca

From: [Brouwer, Shauna CITZ:EX](#)
To: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#)
Cc: [Cook, Jeannette CITZ:EX](#); [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: RE: Approval Request - Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)
Date: November 6, 2023 10:35:16 AM

Looks fine

From: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:32 AM
To: Brouwer, Shauna CITZ:EX <Shauna.Brouwer@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Cook, Jeannette CITZ:EX <Jeannette.Cook@gov.bc.ca>; Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Approval Request - Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

Good morning Shauna,

Bob Mackin had a follow up question. He's looking for a copy of the specific directive from 2020 banning WeChat.

s.13; s.15

Original response:

- In early 2020, it was communicated by the office of the CISO to all security leads across all government ministries that WeChat was not permitted on government managed devices.
- Those security leads then ensured the application was uninstalled. The uninstalls were verified in reporting.
- The ministry continues to monitor applications for any potential cybersecurity risks that may be associated.

Please advise if any questions or concerns. Reporter's deadline is ASAP.

Kind regards,

Farah Tarannum | Senior Public Affairs Officer

Government Communications and Public Engagement

Ministry of Citizens' Services

Mobile: (250) 883-2847 | **E-mail:** farah.tarannum@gov.bc.ca

From: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#)
To: [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#)
Cc: [Fernandes, Jennifer GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: FOR MO: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)
Date: November 6, 2023 10:37:00 AM

Hi Vivian,

Request below is good to go to MO. Approved by Don, Alex, CJ and Shauna.

Bob Mackin had a follow up question. He's looking for a copy of the specific directive from 2020 banning WeChat.

s.13; s.15

Original response:

- In early 2020, it was communicated by the office of the CISO to all security leads across all government ministries that WeChat was not permitted on government managed devices.
- Those security leads then ensured the application was uninstalled. The uninstalls were verified in reporting.
- The ministry continues to monitor applications for any potential cybersecurity risks that may be associated.

Please advise if any questions or concerns. Reporter's deadline is ASAP.

Kind regards,

Farah Tarannum | Senior Public Affairs Officer

Government Communications and Public Engagement

Ministry of Citizens' Services

Mobile: (250) 883-2847 | **E-mail:** farah.tarannum@gov.bc.ca

From: [Pollard, Desmond CITZ:EX](#)
To: [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#); [Hannah, Jeff GCPE:EX](#); [Toor, Arjin CITZ:EX](#); [Mayer, Braeden CITZ:EX](#)
Cc: [Fernandes, Jennifer GCPE:EX](#); [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices
Date: November 6, 2023 11:42:31 AM

Approved.

Thanks,
D

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 11:36 AM
To: Pollard, Desmond CITZ:EX <Desmond.Pollard@gov.bc.ca>; Hannah, Jeff GCPE:EX <Jeff.Hannah@gov.bc.ca>; Toor, Arjin CITZ:EX <Arjin.Toor@gov.bc.ca>; Mayer, Braeden CITZ:EX <Braeden.Mayer@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Fernandes, Jennifer GCPE:EX <Jennifer.Fernandes@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

As discussed, revised for review:

Bob Mackin had a follow up question. He's looking for a copy of the specific directive from 2020 banning WeChat (which doesn't exist). Suggested response for review/approval:

Suggested response:

- The communication in 2020 by CISO was done by phone to all security leads. Given the low number of people who had the application on their government device, they were also contacted directly by phone with instruction to remove the application. The uninstalls were verified in reporting.
- **(If an additional follow up)** The CISO does conduct reviews to ensure no banned apps have been installed.

Original response:

- In early 2020, it was communicated by the office of the CISO to all security leads across all government ministries that WeChat was not permitted on government managed devices.
- Those security leads then ensured the application was uninstalled. The uninstalls were verified in reporting.
- The ministry continues to monitor applications for any potential cybersecurity risks that may be associated.

From: [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#)
To: [Sexsmith, Melissa M CITZ:EX](#); [Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX](#); [Costello, Don CITZ:EX](#); [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#); [MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX](#)
Cc: [Elson, Jody CITZ:EX](#); [Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX](#)
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)
Date: November 7, 2023 1:42:54 PM

Thank you for clarifying and the further explanations. We'll forward along to DMO.

Cheers,

Vivian

From: Sexsmith, Melissa M CITZ:EX <Melissa.M.Sexsmith@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 1:40 PM
To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>; Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX <CherrieLen.Garcia@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

s.13

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 12:44 PM
To: Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>; Sexsmith, Melissa M CITZ:EX <Melissa.M.Sexsmith@gov.bc.ca>; Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX <CherrieLen.Garcia@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

s.13

From: Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 12:26 PM
To: Sexsmith, Melissa M CITZ:EX <Melissa.M.Sexsmith@gov.bc.ca>; Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX <CherrieLen.Garcia@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

Thanks Melissa.

Vivian- you can send responses as you have them to DMO for approval

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Sexsmith, Melissa M CITZ:EX <Melissa.M.Sexsmith@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 12:12:34 PM
To: Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>; Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX <CherrieLen.Garcia@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

Thanks, with a hat tip to Alex who provided me a bit more background on this, a few recommendations below. s.13

s.13

Are you able to clarify the frequency of the CISO review/reporting mentioned in Q3?

1. **In a previous message, you said they were notified by phone. Now you are saying there was a meeting. Which was it?**

On March 16, 2020, the CISO hosted a conference call (i.e., a "meeting") with security leads. Subsequently, the 24 employees with the application on their government issued device were also contacted directly by phone with instructions to remove the application.

2. **Why was the decision not documented?**

The operational decision to disallow the use of the app on government-issued was documented by adding WeChat to the list of banned apps.

3. **How specifically has this been "verified in reporting?" How many verifications? How many reports?**

The Ministry has a regular practice of conducting periodic reviews to ensure that banned apps are not installed on government-issued devices. These reviews confirm that the app is not installed on government-issued devices. In March 2020, security leads took steps to validate that the application had been uninstalled from the specific devices identified at the time, and each security lead reported back to the CISO that the application had been removed from the government-issued devices.

4. **Was the Information and Privacy Commissioner consulted or notified?**

No. The decision to ban the application was made out of an abundance of caution as an operational security decision. It was not the result of an actual or suspected privacy breach.

From: Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 9:10 AM
To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>; Sexsmith, Melissa M CITZ:EX <Melissa.M.Sexsmith@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX <CherrieLen.Garcia@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

Hi Vivian,
s.13

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 8:19 AM
To: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>; Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX <CherrieLen.Garcia@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

Thanks.

From: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 7:46 AM

To: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>; Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX <CherrieLen.Garcia@gov.bc.ca>; Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

s.13; s.15

s.13

Don Costello | A/ Executive Director and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)
Enterprise Services | Office of the Chief Information Officer | Ministry of Citizens' Services
PO Box 9412, Stn Prov Gov, Victoria BC V8W 9V1
[250 589 2358](tel:2505892358)

From: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 4:43 PM

To: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>; Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Garcia, Cherrie-Len CITZ:EX <CherrieLen.Garcia@gov.bc.ca>; Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

Good afternoon all,

The reporter had some more follow up today requesting clarifying on information provided so far. Below is a drafted response for your review; please advise if any edits or concerns.

Are you able to clarify the frequency of the CISO review/reporting mentioned in Q3?

s.13

Thank you,

Farah Tarannum | Senior Public Affairs Officer

Government Communications and Public Engagement

Ministry of Citizens' Services

Mobile: (250) 883-2847 | **E-mail:** farah.tarannum@gov.bc.ca

From: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 4:06 PM

To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Thank you , this looks fine

Don Costello | A/ Executive Director and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)

Enterprise Services | Office of the Chief Information Officer | Ministry of Citizens' Services
PO Box 9412, Stn Prov Gov, Victoria BC V8W 9V1
250 589 2358

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 3:34 PM
To: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Elson, Jody CITZ:EX <Jody.Elson@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

s.13; s.15

s.13; s.15 Are you OK with the suggested messaging to answer the reporter's question/comment about a specific written directive not being issued?

s.13; s.15

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX
Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 12:06 PM
To: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Hi! Just following up on our chat from yesterday. s.13; s.15

s.13; s.15

Thanks,

Vivian

From: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 11:53 AM
To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Re: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Vivian, is it possible for us to have a call to discuss?

I think that may make this easier and quicker.

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 11:44:12 AM

To: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Hi! I'm sorry. Another follow up from the reporter. He's looking for exact date that it was announced to security leads and a copy of the memo/directive.

Pls advise on what we can provide, or if there's issues, pls feel free to call to discuss first.

Thanks,

Vivian

250 213-2972

From: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 4:24 PM

To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Don Costello | A/ Executive Director and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)
Enterprise Services | Office of the Chief Information Officer | Ministry of Citizens' Services
PO Box 9412, Stn Prov Gov, Victoria BC V8W 9V1
[250 589 2358](tel:2505892358)

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 3:35 PM

To: MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>; Costello, Don CITZ:EX

<Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Importance: High

Hi! A couple of follow-up questions from the MO on parts of the response. Can you advise on the points in yellow?

- In early 2020, it was communicated by the office of the CISO to all security leads across all government ministries that WeChat was not permitted on government managed devices.
- Those security leads then ensured the application was uninstalled. The uninstalls were verified in reporting.
- The ministry continues to monitor applications for any potential cybersecurity risks that may be associated.

Thanks,

Vivian

From: MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 1:33 PM

To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

That works

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 1:23 PM

To: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>; MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Thanks! s.13

s.13 Any concerns from either of you?

From: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 12:40 PM

To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>; Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Cybersecurity is a priority for the BC Government. There are strong tools and processes in place to monitor BC Government systems. ^{s.13}

s.13

We will continue to monitor and address these applications and all potential cybersecurity risks.

Don Costello | A/ Executive Director and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)
Enterprise Services | Office of the Chief Information Officer | Ministry of Citizens' Services
PO Box 9412, Stn Prov Gov, Victoria BC V8W 9V1
250 589 2358

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 9:48 AM
To: Costello, Don CITZ:EX <Don.Costello@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: MacLennan, Alex CITZ:EX <Alex.MacLennan@gov.bc.ca>; Bevan, Audra L CITZ:EX <Audra.Bevan@gov.bc.ca>; Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices

Hi! Reporter has followed up. Can you provide advice on wording on why policy directive wasn't issued? i.e. how did people know to remove from their devices? FYi, we've sent the second part of his question to GCPE-HQ to provide an answer for.

Thanks,

Vivian

Reporter

Bob Mackin, Reporter
The Breaker News
bob@thebreaker.news
604-982-9130 c: 604-724-5604

Deadline ASAP

Request

Is there any policy directive that you can send to me about the WeChat ban from early 2020?
I am aware the government does use WeChat to promote news releases.

Recommendation

From: [Brouwer, Shauna CITZ:EX](#)
To: [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#)
Cc: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#); [Cook, Jeannette CITZ:EX](#); [Molyneux, Jennifer CITZ:EX](#)
Subject: RE: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)
Date: November 7, 2023 2:18:09 PM

Looks fine thank you

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 2:05 PM
To: Brouwer, Shauna CITZ:EX <Shauna.Brouwer@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>; Cook, Jeannette CITZ:EX <Jeannette.Cook@gov.bc.ca>; Molyneux, Jennifer CITZ:EX <Jennifer.Molyneux@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: FW: Follow-up Media Request: WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices (ASAP)

Hi! Bob Mackin has additional follow-ups. CJ has signed off. Any concerns from you?

Thanks,

Vivian

Are you able to clarify the frequency of the CISO review/reporting mentioned in Q3?

1. **In a previous message, you said they were notified by phone. Now you are saying there was a meeting. Which was it?**

On March 16, 2020, the CISO hosted a conference call (i.e., a "meeting") with security leads. Subsequently, the 24 employees with the application on their government issued device were also contacted directly by phone with instructions to remove the application.

2. **Why was the decision not documented?**

The operational decision to disallow the use of the app on government-issued was documented by adding WeChat to the list of banned apps.

3. **How specifically has this been "verified in reporting?" How many verifications? How many reports?**

The Ministry has a regular practice of conducting periodic reviews to ensure that banned apps are not installed on government-issued devices. These reviews confirm that the app is not installed on government-issued devices. In March 2020, security leads took steps to validate that the application had been uninstalled from the specific devices identified at the time, and each security lead reported back to the CISO that the application had been removed from the government-issued devices.

4. Was the Information and Privacy Commissioner consulted or notified?

No. The decision to ban the application was made out of an abundance of caution as an operational security decision. It was not the result of an actual or suspected privacy breach.

From: [Bob Mackin](#)
To: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#)
Cc: [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#); [Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX](#)
Subject: Re: Media request
Date: November 7, 2023 4:39:00 PM

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hello,

Is there a list of banned apps? Is there anything documented about this decision? Was it done on a conference call, with the express intent to not document the decision, so as to avoid accountability (and questions from reporters)?

--bob

On Tue, Nov 7, 2023 at 4:36 PM Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Please find below responses to your follow up questions, attributable to the Ministry of Citizens' Services:

1. In a previous message, you said they were notified by phone. Now you are saying there was a meeting. Which was it?

- On March 16, 2020, the CISO hosted a conference call (i.e., a "meeting") with security leads. Subsequently, as previously stated, anyone with the application on their government issued device were also contacted directly by phone with instructions to remove the application.

2. Why was the decision not documented?

- The operational decision to disallow the use of the app on government-issued was documented by adding WeChat to the list of banned apps.

3. How specifically has this been "verified in reporting?" How many verifications? How many reports?

- The Ministry conducts periodic reviews to ensure that banned apps are not installed on government-issued devices. These reviews confirm that the app is not installed on government-issued devices. In March 2020, as previously mentioned, security leads ensured the application had been uninstalled from the devices identified at the time, and each security lead reported back to the CISO that the application had been removed from the government-issued devices.

4. **Was the Information and Privacy Commissioner consulted or notified?**

- No. The decision to ban the application was made out of an abundance of caution as an operational security decision. It was not the result of an actual or suspected privacy breach.

Thank you.

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 3:01 PM
To: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

In a previous message, you said they were notified by phone. Now you are saying there was a meeting.

Which was it?

Why was the decision not documented?

How specifically has this been "verified in reporting?" How many verifications? How many reports?

Was the Information and Privacy Commissioner consulted or notified?

(I have CC'd the Chief Information Officer, in the hope that the Ministry will be fully transparent on this issue so that I can get a full understanding, as I am not getting that from GCPE.)

On Mon, Nov 6, 2023 at 2:49 PM Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi Bob,

Please find below responses attributable to the Ministry of Citizens' Services:

What was the date?

- The meeting with the security leads was March 16, 2020.

How was this "verified in reporting"?

- The CISO does conduct reviews to ensure no banned apps have been installed.

Thank you.

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 12:16 PM
To: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

What was the date?

How was this "verified in reporting"?

On Mon, Nov 6, 2023 at 12:04 PM Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX
<Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Please find below a response attributable to the Ministry of Citizens' Services:

- The communication in 2020 by CISO was done by phone to all security leads. Given the low number of people who had the application on their government device, they were also contacted directly by phone with instruction to remove the application. The uninstalls were verified in reporting.

Thank you.

From: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:12 AM
To: 'Bob Mackin' <bob@thebreaker.news>
Cc: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Media request

Our apologies. We saw that the story had been published. We'll follow up with staff again.

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:08 AM
To: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hello,

I am trying again with my questions about the provincial ban on WeChat on provincial devices.

I do not understand why this is so difficult for you to fulfil my request.

Could you please answer my questions? Could you please provide me a copy of the directive?

Sincerely,

Bob Mackin

On Tue, Oct 31, 2023 at 4:52 PM Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news> wrote:

Thank-you.

Could you please provide me the precise date that this was announced to security leads?

Could you please provide me a copy of the memo or a link to it, if it is published online?

Sincerely,

Bob Mackin

On Tue, Oct 31, 2023 at 4:41 PM Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Please find below a response to your follow-up questions, attributable to the Ministry of Citizens' Services.

- Cybersecurity is a priority for the province and there are strong tools and processes in place to monitor BC Government systems. In early 2020, it was communicated by the office of the Chief Information Security Officer to all security leads across all government ministries that WeChat was not permitted on government managed devices. Those security leads then ensured the application was uninstalled and reported back when the application was uninstalled. The ministry continues to monitor applications for any potential cybersecurity risks that may be associated.
- WeChat is an important tool to share information about government programs, services, and information with people in their preferred language.

The Province uses a contractor to post information to that app on our behalf.

Thank you,

Farah

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 11:53 AM
To: 'Bob Mackin' <bob@thebreaker.news>
Cc: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Media request

Yes, we're looking into that for you.

Cheers,

Vivian

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 11:52 AM
To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

I have looked at this site, which includes guidelines for all manner of device and social media use. I have not found anything that specifically deals with WeChat.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/services-for-government/policies-procedures/appropriate-use-policy>

Could you please clarify and send me whatever policy directive is specific to WeChat?

On Tue, Oct 31, 2023 at 9:38 AM Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news> wrote:

Thank-you. Is there any policy directive that you can send to me about the WeChat ban from early 2020?

I am aware the government does use WeChat to promote news releases.

On Tue, Oct 31, 2023 at 9:26 AM Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi Bob,

We've learned that since early 2020, WeChat has not been permitted on government managed devices and that the BC Government does not use the Kaspersky application and it is not on any BC Government managed device.

Cheers,

Vivian

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 8:08 AM
To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Good morning,

i was aware of the TikTok ban on government devices, which I covered at the end of February when it happened. I was not aware that any action had been taken since on WeChat. The federal government moved on WeChat (as well as Kaspersky anti-viral software) yesterday.

--bob

On Mon, Oct 30, 2023 at 2:44 PM Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX
<Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

HI! I believe WeChat is already banned, but will double-check and one of us will get back to you.

Cheers,

Vivian

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>

Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 2:43 PM

To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hello,

Will the B.C. government follow the lead of the federal government and ban the use of WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices?

Sincerely,

Bob Mackin

Reporter, theBreaker.news

604-982-9130

--

Read [theBreaker.news](#)

[Listen to the Podcast](#) on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)

[Subscribe to the newsletter](#)

--

Read [theBreaker.news](#)

[Listen to the Podcast](#) on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)

[Subscribe to the newsletter](#)

--

Read [theBreaker.news](#)

[Listen to the Podcast](#) on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and
[Spotify](#)

[Subscribe to the newsletter](#)

--

Read [theBreaker.news](#)

[Listen to the Podcast](#) on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and
[Spotify](#)

[Subscribe to the newsletter](#)

--

Read [theBreaker.news](#)

[Listen to the Podcast](#) on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and
[Spotify](#)

[Subscribe to the newsletter](#)

--

Read [theBreaker.news](#)

Listen to the Podcast on TuneIn, Apple Podcasts and Spotify

Subscribe to the newsletter

--

Read theBreaker.news

Listen to the Podcast on TuneIn, Apple Podcasts and Spotify

Subscribe to the newsletter

--

Read theBreaker.news

Listen to the Podcast on TuneIn, Apple Podcasts and Spotify

Subscribe to the newsletter

--

Read theBreaker.news

Listen to the Podcast on TuneIn, Apple Podcasts and Spotify

Subscribe to the newsletter

From: [Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX](#)
To: ["Bob Mackin"](#)
Cc: [Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX](#); [Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX](#)
Subject: RE: Media request
Date: November 7, 2023 4:36:18 PM

Please find below responses to your follow up questions, attributable to the Ministry of Citizens' Services:

1. **In a previous message, you said they were notified by phone. Now you are saying there was a meeting. Which was it?**
 - On March 16, 2020, the CISO hosted a conference call (i.e., a "meeting") with security leads. Subsequently, as previously stated, anyone with the application on their government issued device were also contacted directly by phone with instructions to remove the application.
2. **Why was the decision not documented?**
 - The operational decision to disallow the use of the app on government-issued was documented by adding WeChat to the list of banned apps.
3. **How specifically has this been "verified in reporting?" How many verifications? How many reports?**
 - The Ministry conducts periodic reviews to ensure that banned apps are not installed on government-issued devices. These reviews confirm that the app is not installed on government-issued devices. In March 2020, as previously mentioned, security leads ensured the application had been uninstalled from the devices identified at the time, and each security lead reported back to the CISO that the application had been removed from the government-issued devices.
4. **Was the Information and Privacy Commissioner consulted or notified?**
 - No. The decision to ban the application was made out of an abundance of caution as an operational security decision. It was not the result of an actual or suspected privacy breach.

Thank you.

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 3:01 PM
To: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>; Ritchie, CJ CITZ:EX <CJ.Ritchie@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

In a previous message, you said they were notified by phone. Now you are saying there was a meeting.
Which was it?
Why was the decision not documented?
How specifically has this been "verified in reporting?" How many verifications? How many reports?
Was the Information and Privacy Commissioner consulted or notified?
(I have CC'd the Chief Information Officer, in the hope that the Ministry will be fully transparent on this issue so that I can get a full understanding, as I am not getting that from GCPE.)

On Mon, Nov 6, 2023 at 2:49 PM Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi Bob,

Please find below responses attributable to the Ministry of Citizens' Services:

What was the date?

- The meeting with the security leads was March 16, 2020.

How was this "verified in reporting"?

- The CISO does conduct reviews to ensure no banned apps have been installed.

Thank you.

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 12:16 PM

To: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Re: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

What was the date?

How was this "verified in reporting"?

On Mon, Nov 6, 2023 at 12:04 PM Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Please find below a response attributable to the Ministry of Citizens' Services:

- The communication in 2020 by CISO was done by phone to all security leads. Given the low number of people who had the application on their government device, they were also contacted directly by phone with instruction to remove the application. The uninstalls were verified in reporting.

Thank you.

From: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:12 AM

To: 'Bob Mackin' <bob@thebreaker.news>

Cc: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: Media request

Our apologies. We saw that the story had been published. We'll follow up with staff again.

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 10:08 AM

To: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Re: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hello,

I am trying again with my questions about the provincial ban on WeChat on provincial devices.

I do not understand why this is so difficult for you to fulfil my request.

Could you please answer my questions? Could you please provide me a copy of the directive?

Sincerely,

Bob Mackin

On Tue, Oct 31, 2023 at 4:52 PM Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news> wrote:

Thank-you.

Could you please provide me the precise date that this was announced to security leads?

Could you please provide me a copy of the memo or a link to it, if it is published online?

Sincerely,

Bob Mackin

On Tue, Oct 31, 2023 at 4:41 PM Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Please find below a response to your follow-up questions, attributable to the Ministry of Citizens' Services.

- Cybersecurity is a priority for the province and there are strong tools and processes in place to monitor BC Government systems. In early 2020, it was communicated by the office of the Chief Information Security Officer to all security leads across all government ministries that WeChat was not permitted on government managed devices. Those security leads then ensured the application was uninstalled and reported back when the application was uninstalled. The ministry continues to monitor applications for any potential cybersecurity risks that may be associated.
- WeChat is an important tool to share information about government programs, services, and information with people in their preferred language. The Province uses a contractor to post information to that app on our behalf.

Thank you,
Farah

From: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 11:53 AM
To: 'Bob Mackin' <bob@thebreaker.news>
Cc: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Media request

Yes, we're looking into that for you.

Cheers,

Vivian

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>
Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 11:52 AM
To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

I have looked at this site, which includes guidelines for all manner of device and social media use. I have not found anything that specifically deals with WeChat.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/services-for-government/policies-procedures/appropriate-use-policy>

Could you please clarify and send me whatever policy directive is specific to WeChat?

On Tue, Oct 31, 2023 at 9:38 AM Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news> wrote:

Thank-you. Is there any policy directive that you can send to me about the WeChat ban from early 2020?

I am aware the government does use WeChat to promote news releases.

On Tue, Oct 31, 2023 at 9:26 AM Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX
<Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi Bob,

We've learned that since early 2020, WeChat has not been permitted on government managed devices and that the BC Government does not use the Kaspersky application and it is not on any BC Government managed device.

Cheers,

Vivian

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 8:08 AM

To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Tarannum, Farah GCPE:EX <Farah.Tarannum@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Re: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Good morning,
i was aware of the TikTok ban on government devices, which I covered at the end of February when it happened. I was not aware that any action

had been taken since on WeChat. The federal government moved on WeChat (as well as Kaspersky anti-viral software) yesterday.
--bob

On Mon, Oct 30, 2023 at 2:44 PM Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX
<Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi! I believe WeChat is already banned, but will double-check and one of us will get back to you.

Cheers,

Vivian

From: Bob Mackin <bob@thebreaker.news>
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 2:43 PM
To: Thomas, Vivian P GCPE:EX <Vivian.Thomas@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Media request

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hello,
Will the B.C. government follow the lead of the federal government and ban the use of WeChat and Kaspersky on government devices?
Sincerely,

Bob Mackin
Reporter, theBreaker.news
604-982-9130

--

Read [theBreaker.news](https://thebreaker.news)
[Listen to the Podcast on TuneIn, Apple Podcasts and Spotify](#)
[Subscribe to the newsletter](#)

--

Read [theBreaker.news](https://thebreaker.news)
[Listen to the Podcast on TuneIn, Apple Podcasts and Spotify](#)
[Subscribe to the newsletter](#)

--
Read [theBreaker.news](#)
Listen to the Podcast on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)
Subscribe to the newsletter

--
Read [theBreaker.news](#)
Listen to the Podcast on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)
Subscribe to the newsletter

--
Read [theBreaker.news](#)
Listen to the Podcast on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)
Subscribe to the newsletter

--
Read [theBreaker.news](#)
Listen to the Podcast on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)
Subscribe to the newsletter

--
Read [theBreaker.news](#)
Listen to the Podcast on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)
Subscribe to the newsletter

--
Read [theBreaker.news](#)
Listen to the Podcast on [TuneIn](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)
Subscribe to the newsletter