

BITCHAT WORKSHOP

Decentralized, Censorship-Resistant Communication

World Liberty Congress Training

Monday, 18 May 2026 · 12:00 PM EST

Presented by Derek Ross — Soapbox



Why this matters NOW

UGANDA · JANUARY 2026

1.7 MILLION DOWNLOADS in days as the government shut down the internet before the presidential election.

Internet shutdowns and platform bans are already hitting WLC networks:

INDONESIA

Aug 2025 — protest crackdowns

NEPAL

Sept 2025 — 26 platforms banned

MADAGASCAR

Sept 2025 — youth protests

UGANDA

Jan 2026 — election blackout

IRAN

Jan 2026 — anti-govt protests

CHINA

April 2026 — app removed from store

Several of these are countries where the WLC is active or expanding.



What you'll leave with today

01

Understanding

What Bitchat is, how it works, and how it's different from Signal or WhatsApp.

02

Judgment

When Bitchat is the right tool —
and when it absolutely isn't.
Know the limits.

03

Field Readiness

How to integrate Bitchat into your digital security stack before a crisis hits.



Bitchat in one sentence

DEFINITION

A peer-to-peer messaging app that runs over Bluetooth mesh networks — no internet, no servers, no phone numbers, no accounts.

Built by Jack Dorsey + open source contributors. Launched July 2025.

OPEN SOURCE

BLUETOOTH MESH

END-TO-END ENCRYPTED

NO ACCOUNTS



Two transports, one app

Bitchat moves messages over Bluetooth when there's no internet, and over the Nostr protocol when there is.

OFFLINE MODE

Bluetooth Mesh

- ▶ Phones become relays — up to 7 hops
- ▶ Works with NO internet or cellular
- ▶ Direct range ~30m; multi-hop further
- ▶ Default for #mesh channel and nearby DMs
- ▶ Encrypted with Noise XX (Curve25519)

ONLINE MODE

Nostr over Tor

- ▶ Falls back to internet when offline peer is unreachable
- ▶ All traffic routed through embedded Tor (Arti)
- ▶ Geohash channels for location-scoped chat
- ▶ Different identity per location for privacy
- ▶ Encrypted with NIP-17 gift wraps

You don't pick — Bitchat automatically chooses the best path.



What Bitchat is NOT

NOT a Signal replacement

For high-stakes 1:1 or known-contact comms, Signal remains stronger.

NOT a silver bullet

Metadata still leaks. State-level adversaries can still observe patterns. Use as one layer in a stack.

NOT global by default

Bluetooth range is short. Bitchat shines in dense crowds and local coordination — not cross-border comms.



How the Bluetooth mesh works

Each phone is both a sender and a relay. Messages hop from device to device until they reach you.



YOU



RELAY



RELAY



RELAY



DEST.

~30m

per direct hop

UP TO 7

hops per message

~300m

claimed multi-hop range

8

direct neighbors per phone (default)

The mesh itself has NO cap — a crowd of thousands works. Each phone just holds 8 direct links at a time; messages relay through other phones to reach further-away peers.



Privacy posture

IDENTITY

Keys, not phone numbers

Cryptographic keys generated on-device. No phone, email, or account ever required. Keys live in Android or iOS Keystore.

ENCRYPTION

Noise XX + AES-256-GCM

Curve25519 for DMs, AES-256-GCM for password channels, Ed25519 signing on every packet, traffic-analysis padding.

PANIC MODE

Triple-tap to wipe

Three rapid taps on the logo erases all messages, keys, contacts, and identity. New identity regenerates.



INDONESIA

Late August 2025 · Nationwide protests

HEADLINE NUMBER

~11,000
downloads

Largest Bitchat user base outside Nepal at the time.

WHAT HAPPENED

Protests erupted after lawmakers approved large allowances for themselves. A 21-year-old rideshare driver, Affan Kurniawan, was killed by a police armored vehicle. Protests spread; the Finance Minister was abruptly relieved with one hour's notice. Indonesians turned to Bitchat as digital repression escalated.

SOURCES

Decrypt · Forbes · Reuters · BBC News · SAFEnet statement on digital repression



NEPAL — "GEN Z PROTESTS"

September 4-9, 2025 · Social media ban

HEADLINE NUMBER

+1,400%
in days

3,300 → 48,781 downloads. PM resigned. Ban lifted.

WHAT HAPPENED

The government banned 26 platforms — Facebook, WhatsApp, X, YouTube, Instagram and more. Bitchat downloads surged from 3,300 to 48,781 in days, making Nepal the app's largest user base globally. At least 34 protesters died. Govt buildings burned. PM K.P. Sharma Oli resigned on September 9. The ban was lifted the same day.

SOURCES

Forbes · Decrypt · France 24 · Reuters · BBC News



MADAGASCAR

September 2025 · Anti-corruption youth protests

HEADLINE NUMBER

70,000
in one week

One country produced 1 in 5 global Bitchat installs.

WHAT HAPPENED

Madagascar's youth-led 'Gen Z World' movement protested government corruption. Bitchat downloads in Madagascar alone hit 70,000 in one week — representing roughly 20% of Bitchat's total global download base at the time (~360,000 worldwide).

SOURCES

Cryptonews · Midi Madagasikara · Wikipedia



UGANDA — the headline case

January 14-15, 2026 · Presidential election internet shutdown

DOWNLOADS

1.7M+

#1 on Uganda's app stores

THE STORY

Opposition leader Bobi Wine urged supporters to download Bitchat in late December, warning of a planned shutdown. The government cut internet two days before the January 15 vote. Within days, Bitchat became the most-downloaded app in Uganda.

THE LESSON FOR WLC

Pre-installation by a trusted leader, before the shutdown, is what made Uganda work. Downloads SPIKED during the blackout — but only because seeds were planted earlier.



Iran rises · China responds

IRAN · JANUARY 2026

Concurrent Surge

- ▶ Anti-government protests + internet crackdowns
- ▶ Surge ran in parallel with Uganda
- ▶ Former Iranian political prisoner Ziya Sadr warned about state phishing campaigns and fake APKs
- ▶ Bridgefy was used similarly in Hong Kong 2020 — same playbook, new app

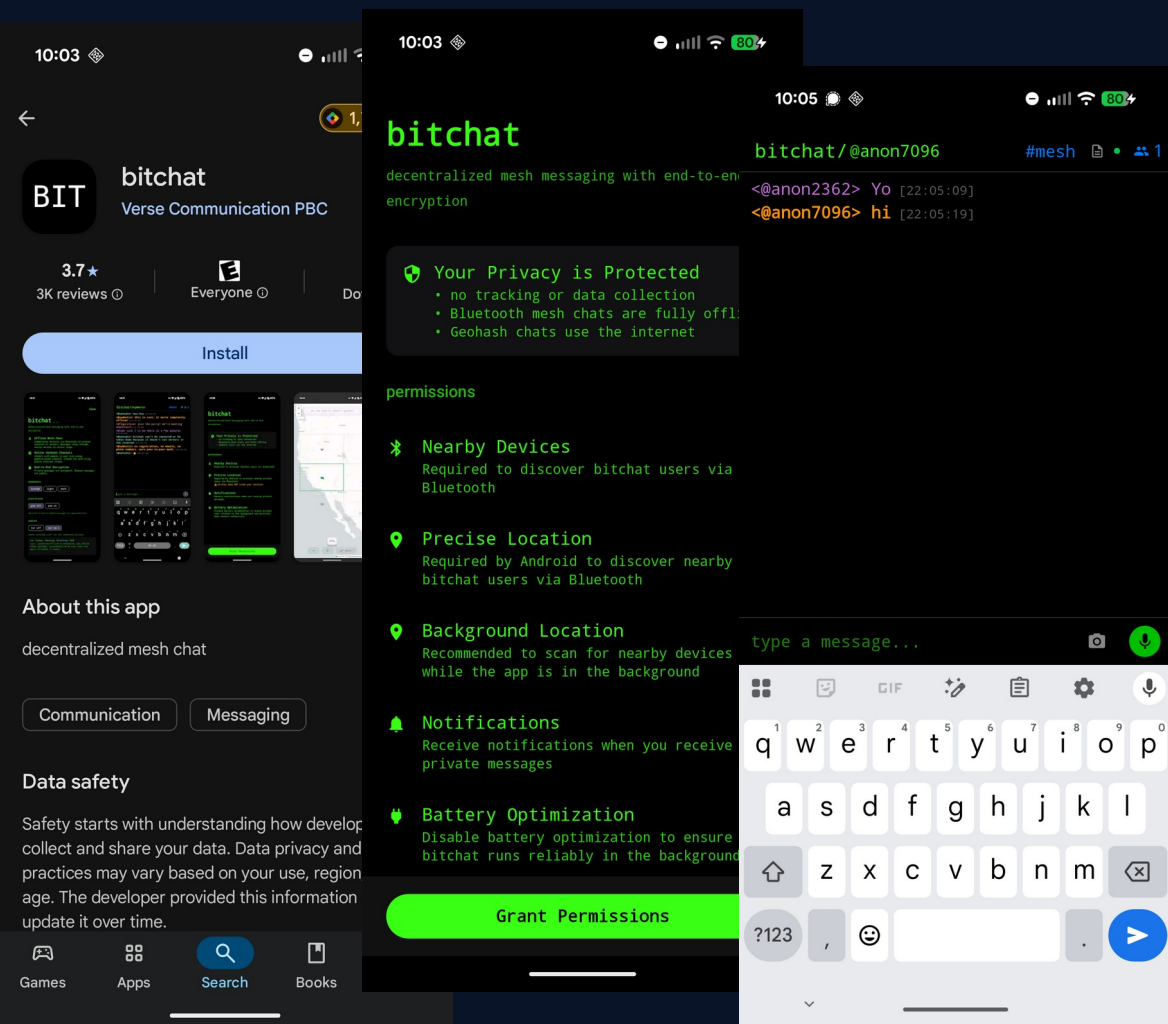
CHINA · APRIL 2026

The Limit

- ▶ Apple removed Bitchat from China App Store
- ▶ Done at request of Cyberspace Administration of China
- ▶ Centralized app stores are still a chokepoint
- ▶ Sideloaded from APK is the workaround — but increases attack surface



Install & First Launch

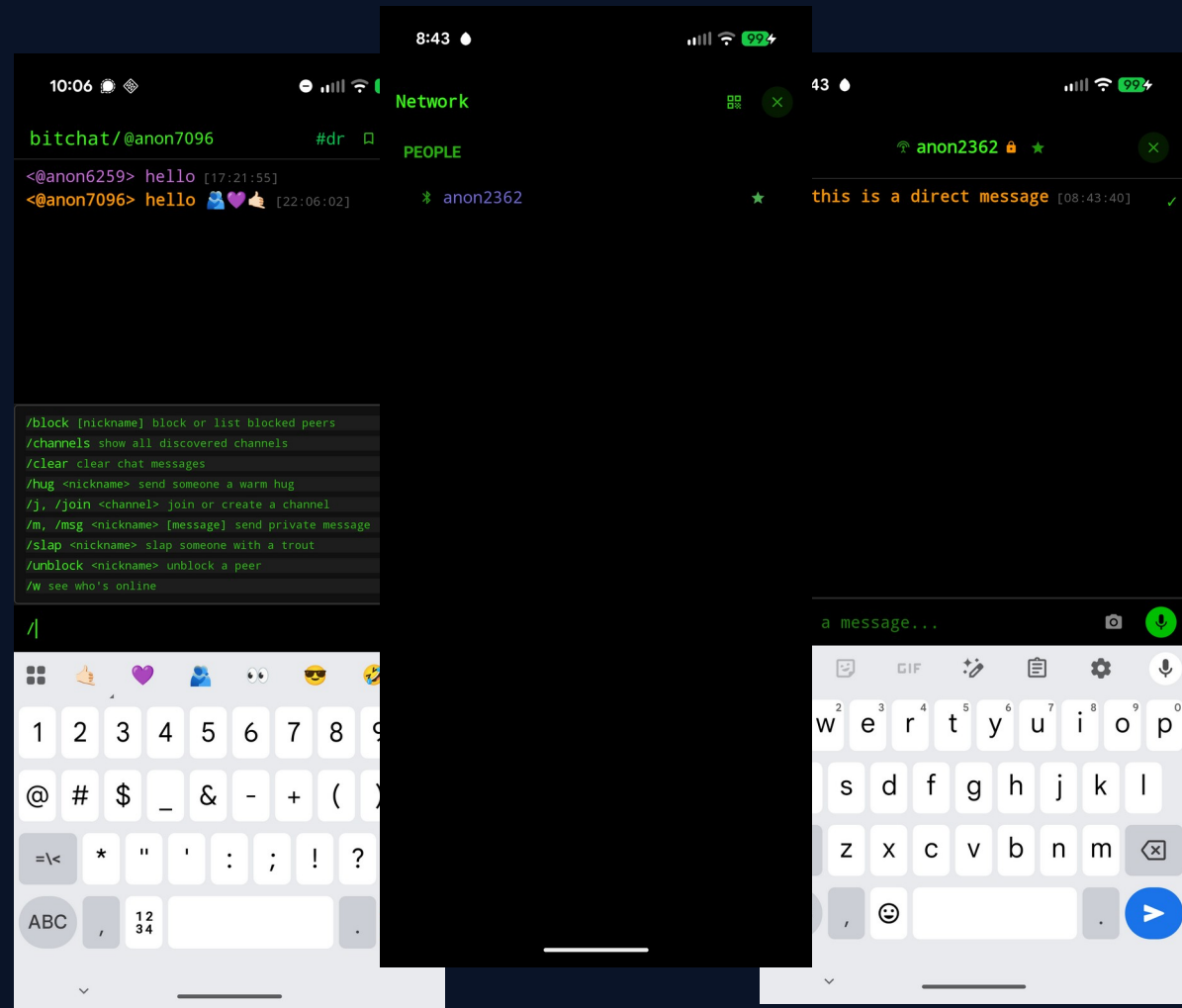


WHAT TO DO

- ▶ Open Google Play → search 'Bitchat'
- ▶ Install in ~30 seconds
- ▶ Grant permissions: Bluetooth, Location, Notifications
- ▶ Identity auto-generated — NO email, NO phone
- ▶ Pick a nickname (15 char max)
- ▶ Land in #mesh public channel



Peer Discovery, DMs & Channels

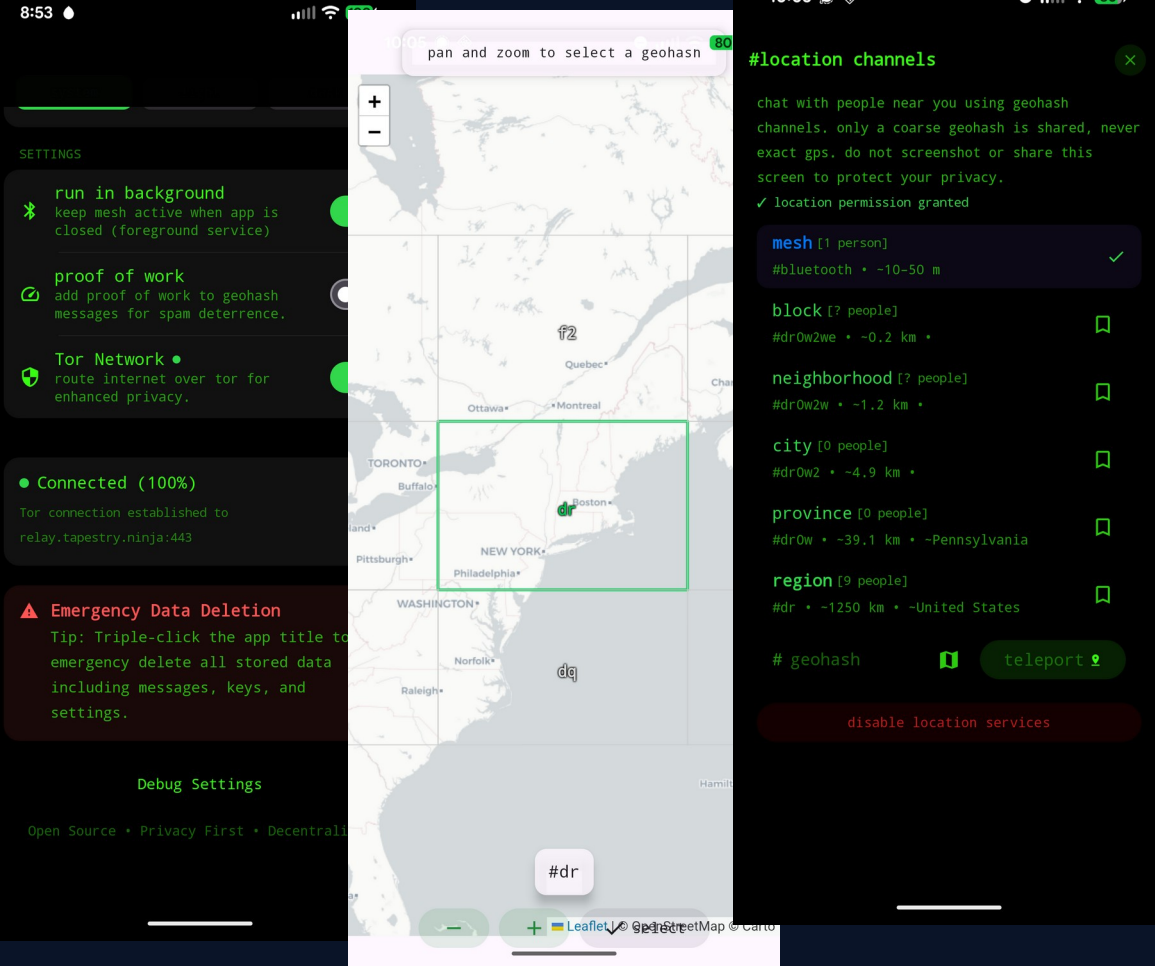


DEMO

- ▶ Two phones discover each other via Bluetooth in seconds
- ▶ Send a DM — encrypted end-to-end
- ▶ Create a channel: /j #wlc-may18
- ▶ Lock it with a password: /pass freedom2026
- ▶ Second phone joins channel + password
- ▶ List who's online: /w
- ▶ Block a peer: /block @nickname



Geohash + Panic Wipe



DEMO

- ▶ Switch from #mesh to Location tab
- ▶ View CITY-level geohash (~5km radius)
- ▶ Show online users in the area
- ▶ Note: location traffic routes through Tor
- ▶ Then: triple-tap the Bitchat logo
- ▶ → All messages, keys, contacts WIPED
- ▶ → New identity regenerates instantly



When Bitchat IS the right tool

ELECTION-DAY SHUTDOWN

Government cuts internet pre-vote (Uganda model). Pre-installed Bitchat keeps local coordination alive.

DENSE PROTEST OR RALLY

Crowds where everyone has Bitchat means a working local network with no cell or WiFi.

INTERNET BLACKOUT DURING UNREST

Nepal-style platform bans plus internet throttling. Communication where neighbors are reachable.

DISASTER OR INFRASTRUCTURE FAILURE

Hurricanes, earthquakes — when the cell network goes down but phones still have battery.

FESTIVAL OR EVENT COORDINATION

Stadium, conference, festival — congested cell networks. Bitchat outperforms in dense environments.



When Bitchat is the WRONG tool

CROSS-BORDER COORDINATION

Talking to diaspora, journalists, allies abroad. Bluetooth doesn't span continents. Use Signal or Agora.

WHISTLEBLOWING TO MEDIA

Anonymous high-stakes leaks. Bitchat has not been audited. Use SecureDrop, Signal with disappearing messages, or Tor-based tools.

LONG-TERM SECURE COMMS

Daily comms with trusted contacts over weeks/months. Signal's protocol is more mature. Bitchat is for moments, not relationships.

HIGH-VALUE TARGETS

If state security has you under active surveillance, Bluetooth metadata can still expose you.

UNVERIFIED IDENTITIES

Without QR-verifying a contact in person, MITM impersonation is possible. Don't trust nicknames alone for high-stakes messages.



Pre-shutdown checklist + honest limits

PREPARE BEFORE A CRISIS

- ▶ Install Bitchat NOW — not when the shutdown starts
- ▶ Verify download source: official Google Play Store, Apple App Store, signed APK from GitHub Releases or Zapstore
- ▶ Pre-add your team as favorites (mutual favorites enable offline sync)
- ▶ Verify identities in person via QR codes
- ▶ Test triple-tap panic wipe so it's muscle memory
- ▶ Distribute channel names + passwords physically, not by text
- ▶ Charge phones; enable battery optimization opt-out

KNOWN RISKS

- ▶ Metadata leaks even when content is encrypted (Prof. Alan Woodward / Surrey)
- ▶ MITM via weak identity authentication (Alex Radocea / Supernetworks)
- ▶ Static session keys — limited forward secrecy
- ▶ Fake APKs + phishing during blackouts (Ziya Sadr)
- ▶ App stores can comply with state takedowns (China, April 2026)



Q & A · Resources

Take these with you.

OFFICIAL

- ▶ bitchat.free
- ▶ GitHub: [permissionlesstech](https://github.com/permissionlesstech)
- ▶ Play Store: [com.bitchat.droid](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bitchat.droid)
- ▶ iOS App Store: [bitchat mesh](https://apps.apple.com/app/bitchat-mesh/id1444444444)

READ

- ▶ Technical whitepaper (GitHub)
- ▶ BISl report: 'Bluetooth Mesh & Internet Shutdowns'
- ▶ Forbes / Reuters / Decrypt coverage
- ▶ Bitchat Explorer: live geohash activity (<https://bitmap.lat>)

REMEMBER

- ▶ Install BEFORE a crisis
- ▶ Verify identities in person (QR)
- ▶ Triple-tap = panic wipe
- ▶ Bitchat is one layer. Build a stack.

