

Guild raises \$1.2m to provide a professional alternative to WhatsApp

Submitted by: Guild Digital Limited

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Messaging app Guild (<https://guild.co>) has raised \$1.2m (£880,000) in Seed funding. Guild is a messaging app for private professional groups. The WhatsApp for work. Guild is GDPR compliant and ad free.

Guild is built for any professional group, network or community where its members want to communicate, share, learn from each other, stay in touch, develop and nurture valuable professional relationships - both internal to the company and externally.

The Seed round, closed on SeedLegals, was raised from 28 private investors including the two founders, Ashley Friedlein and Matthew O’Riordan. Ashley and Matthew previously co-founded Econsultancy, which they successfully sold in 2012 to Centaur Media for £24m.

CEO Friedlein explains: “We think it is time professionals had a messaging app that is properly private, GDPR-compliant and designed just for work use. Research suggests there are already over half a billion people using WhatsApp for professional use and that’s the market Guild is going after.”

Guild members have total control of their own data: in leaving a group they can choose to delete their profile and all contributions. There is no directory of Guild members. No public profiles. No listing of guilds (groups). No way to apply to join a group. You can only be a member of Guild if you are the founder/host of a group or if a host invites you into his/her group. Furthermore, Guild allows users to request a full copy of their data including all contributions, and every member gives explicit consent when accepting an invitation to join a group.

Data from a survey of 500 US/UK professionals this month reveals that 38% of WhatsApp users also use the app for professional purposes although over 75% would like a separate messaging app just for work.

Professor Robin Dunbar, of “Dunbar’s Number” fame has joined the advisory board, and says of Guild: “Over the years, I’ve been approached by many networking-type start-ups, but I have always declined to be involved because they all seemed to be a simple market-places and lack any sense of a social dimension. Guild is in a different league precisely because its focus is small scale and intensely social and pays much closer attention to the way natural human groups are organised.”

Guild goes live this Autumn but you can sign up to receive updates and free access to the product when it launches at <https://guild.co>