

TIME TO BE UNREASONABLE

WHY WE ALL NEED TO BE SAFER ONLINE

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They say great comedy is born of anger.

To be funny, you've got to see the world for what it is, the hypocrisy and contradictions, the craziness and inconsistencies, and you've got to want to call it out and take a lusty swing. For stand-up guys like Bill Hicks and Dennis Leary, it's one idea where (ironically) they'd calmly agree. And the same principle is true of invention and progress.

Progress and invention aren't born of serenity and acceptance of the world and the way things are. Progress is born of anger.

Progress is born of frustration at the way things are and a gut-churning, knuckle-clenching itch to make things better.

You hear comments like, "We identified a need in the market. We took note of what consumer groups had to say. We gave people what they told us they wanted." And sure, sometimes that happens, where people know what they want and ask for it – but it's not what precipitates the big breakthroughs.

The majority of folk – rightly called the silent majority – go along with what's out there. They may not be thrilled by it, but they'll go along. Silently. They're unlikely to shout out or raise arms in revolt, and they're less likely still to go into the garage, take out a toolbox and try and build a better mousetrap.

The ratio of garages to garage band start-ups is not high.

When James Dyson started inventing vacuums, he happily admits, "No one was crying out for cyclonic suction". Dyson looked at his crappy vacuum that sucked in all the wrong ways, where the lint and fluff stuck in a bag and filter that was seriously sub-prime, and he figured he could do a seriously better job. And no question, he did. And much like the once lack of social outburst for cyclonic suction, there's presently no deafening roar for greater security and "military-grade encryption" in our everyday Apps either.

From Gmail to Skype, Hotmail to WeChat, we use what's available to download, tolerating the glitches and focusing on the freedom to express. Way back in 2012, when social network Habbo Hotel was outed by Channel 4 as a paedophile grooming paradise, specifically "a children's brothel", one 13-year old member tweeted matter-of-factly, "Habbo Hotel has always been full of paedophiles. Avoiding them was part of the game"

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Which leads us to our present techno-cultural crossroads – where our relationship with the Internet needs to change.

You see, when it comes to the Internet, perception and reality are at odds. Our early collective view of the Internet was generally warm and positive, conditioned through our use of social media; a world of FRIENDS and LIKES and SHARING. By default, we remain (more than not) trusting when it comes to how we use the Internet. The dawning realities are however less warm and fuzzy.

Consider cybercrime, and the rate at which it's escalating. It's a real worry. It's more than just a bit of Daily Mail sensationalism to get Middle England in a tizz before they pop off to Waitrose for a free coffee.

Cybercrime is now officially the UK's most common offence. It's north of 4 million recorded cases each year. People and companies get hacked, and they don't realise it until it's too late. Many get hacked, and never realise it. It's estimated that 85% of cybercrimes go unreported.

Online grooming; email scams; unsolicited approaches and blackmailing rackets; identity theft; electronic attacks on personal computers and bank accounts – the cautionary tales you read about are getting closer and closer to home, starting to pop-up on our own screens and in our InBoxes. And without ring-fencing how we communicate online, we're leaving the door open.

The 'malware' (as in 'malicious software') known as DRIDEX was responsible for worldwide losses of over \$100m. Money, very simply, was electronically disappearing, was vanished from people's bank accounts. But here's where the picture gets less malicious and a whole lot cheerier. Behaviours can change, positive intervention can be taken by all of us, and new technologies do get invented that can redress the binary balance.

Technology platform Stay Private is one such example. Founded in 2014, Stay Private (www.stayprivate.com) offers a suite of digital products that ensure safe and secure communication across the open Internet.

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The Stay Private platform currently offers three products. Quorum, for businesses. SyncedUp, a mass-market consumer app, and ChatFOSS, a product designed specifically for use in schools and by families. Importantly, all three products only connect to Tier 4 data centres, and all three are built on military-grade encryption algorithms. Simply meaning, it's now easy and affordable to use communication Apps with the same digital technologies as used by NATO and the defence industry.

The very invention of Stay Private is predicated on a simple truth. The online world is no different to any other. It's a mirror held up to human nature, reflecting the good and the bad and the way life is, and there should be levels of acceptance and resistance to this.

It was George Bernard Shaw who suggested that "Progress depends on the unreasonable man". Shaw's observation is genius. Progress depends on the unreasonable man, who rallies against the unreasonable nature of things. Who finds it unreasonable that our vacuum needs a bag and that it's ok for it to only half suck. Who finds it unreasonable that we can't walk around with a 1000 songs in our pocket. Who finds it unreasonable that daily life online should come with hidden danger warnings and clear, present threats. May we all get a little more angry and unreasonable, and in so doing then act upon it.

ABOUT US

StayPrivate ensures safe and secure 2-way communication between businesses and external contacts. Our plug-and-play solution is compatible with all email accounts, making it incredibly easy to encrypt emails and share files securely.

With click-and-PIN access, TLS connections, AES-256 encryption and multi-factor authentication, StayPrivate enables companies of any size to send and receive personal data in a GDPR-compliant manner.

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