ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

Briar

The Insider's Guide

Serverless encrypted messaging that syncs over Tor, Wi-Fi or Bluetooth



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among team communication apps, read from Briar's own pages.

Made by The Briar Project · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

3.0

GPA



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Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from Briar's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on Briar's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

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GPA, above 60 of the 75 other team communication apps we grade

Briar is a free, open-source messaging app built for activists and journalists. It has no central server: messages sync directly between devices over Tor, Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, and are stored on each device. It offers private messages, forums and blogs. The project says it is in maintenance mode.

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about Briar**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

> **But the team says it is in maintenance mode, with no account backup, no file attachments and heavy battery use on Android.**
>
> From our report card of Briar

1 **Best for messaging that works without a server or internet**

Briar syncs messages straight between devices over Tor, Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, so there is no server to block.

2 **It is free**

Briar has no paid plan at all.

3 **It runs on 4 platforms**

Android, Windows, macOS and Linux.

4 **No central server**

Messages are synchronized directly between users' devices, so there is no server to block or take down.

5 **Tor, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth sync**

With internet, Briar syncs over Tor. Without it, devices can sync over Bluetooth, Wi-Fi or memory cards.

6 **Private messages, forums and blogs**

Besides one-to-one chat, it offers public forums and blogs, and desktop releases added private groups.

7 **A 3.0 GPA, above 60 of 75**

That is against the other team communication apps we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

Briar is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

Briar at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN It is free
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON macOS, Windows, Linux, Android
MADE BY The Briar Project	CATEGORY Team Communication
OUR GRADE 3.0 GPA, very good	

The report card

Best for messaging that works without a server or internet

Briar syncs messages straight between devices over Tor, Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, so there is no server to block. But the team says it is in maintenance mode,

with no account backup, no file attachments and heavy battery use on Android. If you need an iPhone app or a tool that is still gaining features, look elsewhere.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	Briar	Graded Nov 13, 2026

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	A	Free and open source with no paid plan, a program anyone can download. Donations only.
Free plan and trial	A	Free for good, no account, no ads, nothing locked behind a payment.
Features	C	Private chats, forums and blogs, which covers the basics. The team's own list of gaps includes no account backup and no attachments, and it is in maintenance mode.
Ease of use	C	No rating on record. You add each contact in person or by link, and the desktop version is still labelled beta.
Platforms and integrations	B	Android plus Windows, Mac and Linux desktop (beta). No iPhone version, no web version and no integrations.

Grade point average — Very good, out of 4.0 **3.0**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who Briar is for

- ✓ Fits if you need to keep talking when the internet is cut off
- ✓ Works for activists and journalists who want messages kept only on their own devices

Who it is not for

- ✕ Skip it if you use an iPhone, as there is no iOS app
- ✕ Not for you if you want new features, because the project says it is in maintenance mode
- ✕ Too light for anything file-heavy, with no attachments listed
- ✕ Watch out: no account backup, so a lost phone can mean lost chats
- ✕ Watch out: Android battery use is high and the desktop apps are beta

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Activists and journalists needing censorship-resistant messaging
- ✓ Groups that must keep talking during internet blackouts
- ✓ Users who want data to stay on their own devices

Worth knowing

- ⓘ In July 2026 the team said Briar is in maintenance mode: only essential security updates and bug fixes.
- ⓘ The team lists missing features such as account backup and file attachments, plus high battery use on Android.
- ⓘ Briar Desktop for Windows, macOS and Linux is labeled beta; the mobile app is Android only, with no iOS version.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

Free

No paid plan at all

Briar is free to use.

> **Free and open source with no paid plan, a program anyone can download.**
>
> From our grade for value for money

FREE

$0

Free and open source. No paid plans; the project accepts donations and grants.

Read from briarproject.org on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

4

Places it runs: macOS, Windows, Linux and Android

Serverless encrypted messaging that syncs over Tor, Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: open source, works offline, local-first, end-to-end encrypted, team chat.

> "
>
> **Private chats, forums and blogs, which covers the basics.**
>
> From our grade for features

No central server

Messages are synchronized directly between users' devices, so there is no server to block or take down.

Tor, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth sync

With internet, Briar syncs over Tor. Without it, devices can sync over Bluetooth, Wi-Fi or memory cards.

Private messages, forums and blogs

Besides one-to-one chat, it offers public forums and blogs, and desktop releases added private groups.

Local storage

Messages and the contact list are stored encrypted on the user's own device, not in a cloud.

Briar Mailbox

A mailbox delivers messages for people who are online at different times.

Where it runs

macOS · Windows · Linux · Android

What it works with

Its own pages name no integrations.

Briar is made by The Briar Project.

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

60/75

Other team communication apps it is graded above

Briar's GPA of 3.0 is higher than 60 of the 75 other team communication apps we grade, and level with 6.

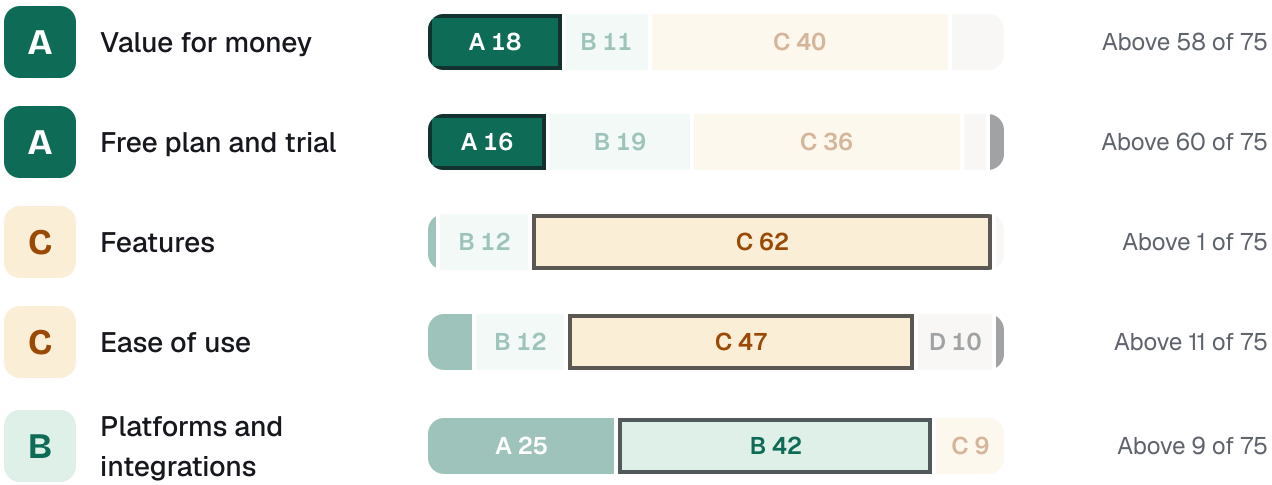
It stands best on free plan and trial (A, above 60 of 75) and worst on features (C, above 1).

Briar has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 2.3 out of 4. Nothing scores higher for less, though at least one tool matches that score at a lower price.

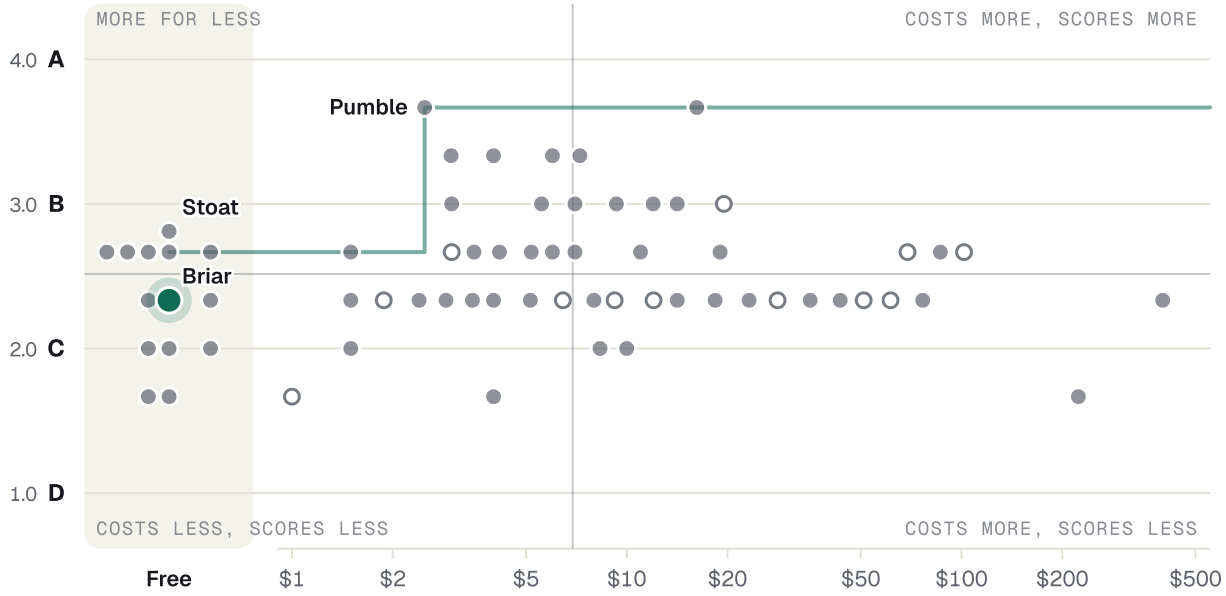
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 76 team communication apps we grade, cut by the letter each got. Briar's own letter is outlined.



Price against what you get

Each dot is one of 66 team communication apps. Further left costs less; higher up scores better on features, ease of use and platforms. Briar is the marked dot.



What paid plans start at, a month (each step along is roughly double)

Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

Briar is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces. It is one of the better ones too: its GPA of 3.0 is higher than 60 of the 75 other team communication apps we grade.

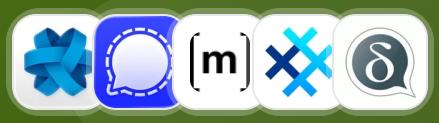
What you could not

- ✕ Chat that a whole team counts on staying up.
- ✕ Apps for macOS, Windows, Linux and Android that stay in step with each other.
- ✕ End-to-end encryption done properly.

What this rests on. Briar's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



Jami, Signal, Matrix, SimpleX Chat and Delta Chat

The 5 tools Briar is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.

3.2 GPA

Jami

Free

Peer-to-peer encrypted chat, calls and video conferences.

- Only Jami lists an iOS app.
- Jami also covers video calls and file sharing.

Briar and Jami compared in full

3.2 GPA

Signal

Free

Nonprofit messenger with end-to-end encrypted chats and calls.

- Only Signal lists an iOS app.
- Briar is open source, according to its own site.
- Signal also covers video calls.

Briar and Signal compared in full



3.0
GPA

Matrix

Free

Open, decentralized network for chat and calls.

- Only Matrix lists a web app.
- Only Matrix lists an iOS app.
- Matrix is self-hostable, according to its own site.

Briar and Matrix compared in full



3.2
GPA

SimpleX Chat

Free

Private messenger that uses no user identifiers at all.

- Only SimpleX Chat lists an iOS app.
- SimpleX Chat also covers video calls.

Briar and SimpleX Chat compared in full



3.2
GPA

Delta Chat

Free

Free decentralized messenger with end-to-end encryption.

- Only Delta Chat lists an iOS app.

Briar and Delta Chat compared in full

PART 06 · QUESTIONS

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

12

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is Briar free?

Yes. Briar is free to use.

How much does Briar cost?

Briar lists one plan. Free: $0.

What platforms does Briar work on?

Briar is available on Android, Windows, macOS and Linux.

Does Briar have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Briar is listed for Android, Windows, macOS and Linux.

Is Briar open source?

Yes. Briar is open source, according to its own site.

Is Briar end-to-end encrypted?

Briar describes itself as end-to-end encrypted on its own site. Nobody here has audited that.

Does Briar work offline?

Yes, according to its own site. What works without a connection differs by plan and platform, so check the vendor's page for the detail.

Who makes Briar?

Briar is made by The Briar Project.

What are the alternatives to Briar?

The closest alternatives to Briar in our directory are Jami, Signal, Matrix, SimpleX Chat and Delta Chat.

How does Briar compare with other team communication apps?

Briar's GPA of 3.0 is higher than 60 of the 75 other team communication apps we grade, and level with 6.

Is Briar good value for money?

ToolGPA grades Briar A for value for money. Briar has no paid plan.

Could I make my own version of Briar?

Briar is free, so making your own would save you nothing. And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from Briar's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from The Briar Project's own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by The Briar Project. Prices change, so check briarproject.org before you buy.

briarproject.org
briarproject.org/download-briar/
briarproject.org/news/2026-maintenance-mode/
briarproject.org/how-it-works/
briarproject.org/download-briar-desktop/

PART 07 · ABOUT

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at **toolgpa.com**.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

Briar, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/briar

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

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ToolGPA, "Briar: The Insider's Guide", checked
Nov 13, 2026. https://toolgpa.com/tools/briar
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Know someone choosing between team communication apps?

Send them this guide: toolgpa.com/tools/briar/guide

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded team communication apps after Briar, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Team Communication Insider's Guide

Every one of the 76 team communication apps we grade, compared

Discord Insider's Guide

Free text, voice and video chat built around servers

3.6 GPA

Pumble Insider's Guide

Team chat with unlimited message history on the free plan

3.6 GPA

Zoho Cliq Insider's Guide

Team chat, calls and meetings from the Zoho suite

3.4 GPA

ToolGPA

Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what Briar's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Briar is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by The Briar Project. Prices and plans change: check briarproject.org before you buy.