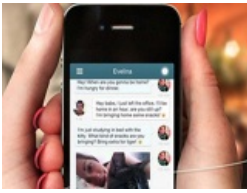


## NEW APPLIANCE ENSURES PRIVATE LIVES STAYS PRIVATE



A new mobile action, appropriately named Pair, specially designed for people in a relationship, is generating considerable interest, especially amongst the younger generation. Offhand the new application does not seem any different from the type of services offered by Twitter and Facebook. The new app, allows the two lovebirds to send messages and photos back and forth – so what's different. There is a sense of secrecy, a sense of belonging and its only between the two of us feeling that begins to grow on the user, within a few hours of using it. It's a relief to realize that no one else is seeing it and commenting on it. It allows for the exchange of doodles, to-do lists and virtually prods you, as if you are physically present with your beloved. Pair brings together the best part of social networking – the warm, cozy feeling of being in touch with people who care deeply about and who are physically far away from you, at the same time providing secrecy from an intrusive world. The company that developed Pair raised \$4.2 million in seed funding from a group of early investors last month, but it appears that they have hit on to the right thing. Teenagers and other users, who were always looking forward to using the Web and their phones, desperately wanted a sphere of their own, something outside of the very public area of the social web. Pair provides the combination of privacy and intimate sharing; it provides the users with their own private space. Andrea Matwyshyn, an assistant professor of legal studies and business ethics at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania said, "We've spent the last decade struggling with this. Companies are trying to figure out the relationship of privacy to users while also trying to provide personalization and customization of their services." The matter of privacy is so strong that even largest social networking sites are getting more and more aware of the need to protect it. Twitter announced that it was introducing a "do not track" feature that users can use, to prohibit Twitter from collecting their personal information. "People can't always foresee or understand what could happen to their data," Professor Matwyshyn said. "But they know they don't want it ending up in the wrong hands." Without doubt, companies that can establish how to install privacy into social service would gain a marketing advantage over its competitors. A search engine Duck Duck Go, does not keep track of its user's search history. Gabriel Weinberg, one of its creators of Duck Duck Go, says that last month, the site performed 45 million searches. Mr. Weinberg believes that the figure will touch 50 million next year. "It's easy to think that no one cares about privacy because they still use all the services that keep track of them. If the switching costs are too high, users aren't willing to make the trade and that's not unreasonable," he said. "But if there's a viable alternative, they're more willing to do it." There are many companies that have tried to incorporate privacy protection services in their businesses, but failed and had to fold up. Diaspora and Applesseed both tried to create private substitutes to Facebook, but have gained little recognition. David Tisch, an angel investor and the managing director of the New York branch of Tech Stars said, "Privacy is hard, technically, to accomplish with real security, and I think people aren't necessarily able to achieve this all the time," he said. It would be foolhardy to presume that users will abandon the conventional social networks. But online intimacy, free from the probing eye, will be a welcome and powerful reprieve. "Entrepreneurs are experimenting with how to appeal to users who are privacy-conscious and benefit from that," Professor Matwyshyn said.