Written by Marco Attard
24 August 2017

"Freedom-respecting computer manufacturer" Purism announces what it calls the "world's first encrypted, open platform smartphone"-- the Librem 5, a phone able to make encrypted calls hiding the user's number.

The device is also able to send encrypted texts and emails, as well as set up a VPN for web browsing. It is compatible with 2G, 3G and 4G connections with any GSM, UMTS or LTE network, and even carry hardware kill switches for the microphone, camera, wifi/Bluetooth and baseband.

The OS of choice is PureOS, the Purism-developed Debian GNU/Linux derivative. It should also be able to run most GNU+Linux distributions. And in case the user wants even more control, Librem will release the device source code, making it open for editing.

"I believe digital rights should mirror physical rights," Purism CEO Todd Weaver says. "Our Librem 5 phone will get humanity closer to that goal by giving people choices about how they want to protect or share their digital identity."

Of course, the Librem 5 is not the first smartphone with a focus on privacy-- 2015 saw Archos release the GranitePhone, a device running on the encrypted GraniteOS, and a year previously Silent Circle launched the Blackphone. That said, Purism has seen success with its Librem 13 and 15 laptops, and says it will first spend 18 months testing the hardware before opening preorders through crowdfunding.

Go Purism