Snapchat privacy and security

Safety tips for using Snapchat

Snapchat is a photo messaging application that displays messages for a maximum of 10 seconds after the message is opened. Messages (or ‘snaps’) are image or video based, alongside any optional captions or superimposed drawings. Snapchats can be saved as ‘your stories’ a feature which enables contacts to view the snap an unlimited amount of time over 24 hours, and is then automatically deleted after this time. Snapchat messages are easily sent to more than one person, and many are used to send ‘selfies’ or photos of a current location.

Snapchat is available for users who are 13 years and over and is currently a phone based application only, available for iOS and Android platforms.

Data

When setting up the Snapchat app on a phone, it requests access to contacts, camera, microphone, SMS, and device ID information. Snapchat collects the following information about its users: name, username, password, e-mail address, phone number, Facebook ID, and uploaded videos and images. If a user chooses to “Find Friends”, Snapchat transmits the user’s address book data to servers to find and share with their friends using the service.

As a general rule, Snapchat keeps messages until they have been opened by all recipients. If a message remains unopened for 30 days, the message is then deleted from Snapchat’s servers. Users should be aware that there are various applications and processes that can be used to retrieve unopened Snapchat messages or save a copy of the time based message.

Contacts

In the settings section, users can configure Snapchat in order to receive messages from existing contacts only. This security setting can be activated by navigating through Inbox > Settings > Who Can Send Me Snaps > My Friends.

Within the friends list, Snapchat displays the three most often contacted people. This is a non-negotiable feature, so it is important to realise that whom you contact the most often can be seen by others.

Block

To block a user, tap the user in your friends list and then the settings icon next to their name. Options in this settings list include editing the name, deleting the contact and blocking them.
Privacy

The best privacy practices for Snapchat include careful contact management and consideration of appropriate content. In addition, users can minimise the chances of a screenshot being taken by choosing a shorter timeframe (the shortest permitted is one second) for which to display the image. Users should be aware that there are apps that can be downloaded that will automatically record a copy of the Snapchat message - regardless of how quickly the message disappears after opening. Many of the image saving apps take a screen shot of the snapchat message without any notification being provided to the sender.

Reporting

To report harassment or inappropriate content, send an email to support@snapchat.com with the recipient’s username, the sender’s username, ages of the users involved (if known), time and date of message(s), and the nature of the message(s)

Deactivating an Account

To delete an account, go to: http://www.snapchat.com/a/delete_account and sign in. If you do not know the password, reset it within the app to continue.

Parents and legal guardians are able to request the closure of their child’s account, by using the form available at http://www.snapchat.com/static_files/deletion_request.pdf. If Snapchat obtains knowledge that a user is under the age of 13, their policy is to close the account and delete that user’s personal information from company servers.

App restrictions

If you wish to limit apps permitted on a device, you can use Restrictions controls. For Apple devices, go to Settings > General > Restrictions > Enter Password > Restrictions > Apps to moderate what age restriction you can set for applications on your account. Additional information can be found at http://support.apple.com/kb/HT4213.

For Android devices, go to Google Play app > Settings > Content Filtering. More information can be found at https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/1075738?hl=en.
Support

Help / Support: snapchat.com
Privacy Policy: snapchat.com/privacy and in-app
Terms of Use: snapchat.com/terms and in-app

Disclaimer: Please note that social media sites continue to update reporting processes. This guide was correct as of October 2013 and uses the latest version of Snapchat at the time of publication. Please refrain from printing in the event reporting methods change. Contact the Cybersafety and Reputation Management team for the most up-to-date advice.

If you are of the opinion that content needs further investigation, contact the Cybersafety and Reputation Management team directly for advice on 3421 6335 or at cybersafety.reputationmanagement@dete.qld.gov.au