



2017

The Guide to being Safe on Social Media



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Yellow



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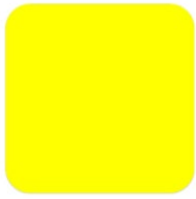
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Your Guide to being Safe on Social



YELLOW

Launched in 2015, and with over 7 million users this app is described as “Tinder for Teens”, despite the assertions by the creators that it is all about making long distance friends on Snapchat, as opposed to dating.

“As we discovered this new behaviour on social network (sic), we made Yellow to answer this need of long-distance digital-only relationships.”

But at the same time, in their own marketing material they describe their product as a ‘virtual flirting app ‘.

Linked to Snapchat , and able to be linked Instagram, and Musical.ly , using GPS software, warnings have gone out world-wide from the FBI, the Australian Federal police, the British police force and more that this app, over most of the others out there, holds a serious risk from online predators and pedophiles.

This app is one Safe on Social Media, strongly suggests you talk to your children about and consider asking them to either delete it, or not to download in the first place

What it is and How it works

Yellow is a free app.

In order to create a profile on Yellow, a user must sign up with their Snapchat user name, and provide their first name, gender and date of birth. The app verifies the telephone number used to sign up by sending through an access code.

After this, an account holder may decide whom they would like to connect to – boys or girls or both. A profile picture is then uploaded and there is the option to provide 5 more individual images. Biography descriptions can be given in emoji's – which really is a fairly blatant pitch to the younger end of the market. Instances have been noted of users including both their phone numbers and last names in their biography page, of concern generally but more so considering the problem this app has with the location services function.

The method the app works by – swiping right if they would like to connect with someone, left if not- is remarkably similar to Tinder. Should both users swipe right on the respective image a connection is made and the Snapchat details are automatically added to their Yellow contacts list, and immediately they can proceed to interact. A left swipe indicates a lack of interest in pursuing the connection.

Users can meet on Yellow and then transfer their interaction to Snapchat where pictures and videos can be exchanged (that later disappear – which is handy for sexting).

Location Services

Safe of Social Media regularly recommends turning the location services off for specific apps. Both on phones, all other devices for apps that do not need to be tracking your every move (you will need to leave location services on for "Find my iphone" weather apps and maps).

Yellows technology , is however based on location services. And this is the real horror story with this application.

In signing up, a user MUST enable the location services on their devices. The yellow app then uses the location provided to link with other users nearby.

There is no option to have location services disabled. In fact, when given the option to make friends nearby or not, the Don't allow button is a false one that cannot be used.

Using a mobile app with a GPS switched on can be a very dangerous thing when communicating with complete strangers.

For an app that claims its primary purpose is for facilitating long distance relationships, the insistence on location services being used, and then matching a user with strangers close by seems contradictory.

Age restrictions

These are confusing and contradictory.

A 12+ rating is indicated on the app store. Google + has no such information other than a "teen" age requirement.

The app itself, in its Terms of Service requires users to be over 13, declaring a 13-17 year old may hold an account with parental permission.

In theory ,the app claims that users under 17 can only connect with those also aged between 13-17 but it is extremely easy to sign up using a false date of birth. There is no real method of verifying a user's age. The age verification system is far from robust.

Within the terms and conditions the app declares that users under 18 cannot friend users over 18, but when it is fairly simple to lie about your birthdate any 12 year old could happily be sharing images with someone much older.

Even more concerning, should your child be under 12, and enter in a birthdate that reflects this, rather than being denied an account, the app defaults to an acceptable birthdate.

YELLOW

The app is buggy

Yellow doesn't have the sleekness of some of its media counterparts. The messenger service in particular has problems that make communication within the app difficult.

This has led to numbers of users swapping details for their other social media accounts to facilitate chatting. Most of these other platforms contain far more personal information than the Yellow app.

Emoji's as language

Even if you are reviewing your teens use of this app, you may need a translation system. Much of the communication between parties is done using the emoticon language that can leave us parents looking for an online translation system.

Most emoji's have very different meaning to what we may think.

Some examples



= I'm horny as f***



= phallic symbolisms

There are more , but the above will do.

Too much information

This app matches users using the location feature. It uses a phones geo-technology to do this. A predator is easily able to source further information through reviewing photos to narrow a child's location further.

The swift linking of the Yellow users accounts to other platforms is very rapid, sharing personal information about the user more quickly than they might consider allowing in real life.

Bullying and Harassment

Snapchat is notorious for inviting sexting, sharing of nude images and cyberbullying with its disappearing image facility. Nude and compromising photographs can be used in ways other than for sexting. Blackmail, or the threat of exposure can be used to force a teen to meet another person, posted online to bully and passed around to humiliate.

Yellow serves to expand the range of persons a teen is exposed to without the security features.

Validation and judgement

Social media sees many teenagers associating high numbers of followers with popularity. Self-worth and follower numbers are being increasingly connected as social media becomes more popular. Some teenagers will lose their judgement in pursuit of online followers and this can lead them to be less careful than they should be.

Yellow is one of those apps that facilitates this need. Friends made on Yellow are translated neatly across to other accounts like Snapchat and Instagram and users have been re-purposing this app to increase their followers deliberately. With the dodgy verification systems, this is a concern.

Yellow asks young people to determine if they want to be in a friendship or a relationship purely based on a profile picture, and emphasizes the importance of physical appearance. Not a message that should be reinforced.

It's asking young people if they want to be in a friendship or a romantic relationship based on a profile picture.

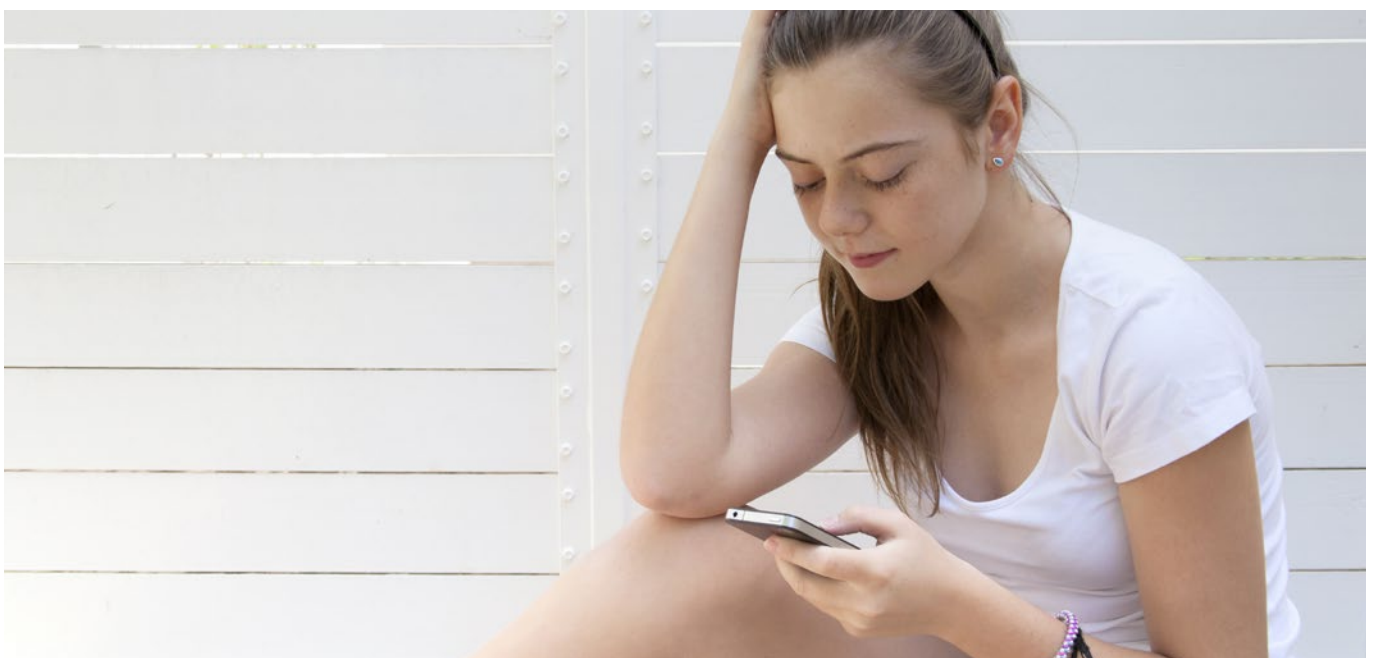
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Promotes “Hooking Up”

Specifying the gender of the friends a user is hoping to find directs this app into the dating arena instead the purported friendship arena. While this alone isn't necessarily bad, it opens the door for a teen to be pressured into sexting, or meeting up for the purpose of a date. While on Snapchat, friends tend to be people known to the individual user, and even then the pressure to sext is still considerable.

Yellow however can takes this pressure to another level by exposing a teenager to people they don't know, and are anxious to please. There are numerous reports of requests for nude photos almost immediately after a connection has been swiped.

When you consider the stranger danger lectures we give our children, and tell them not to post photos of themselves online to a stranger, Yellow opens the door to absolutely anyone nearby.



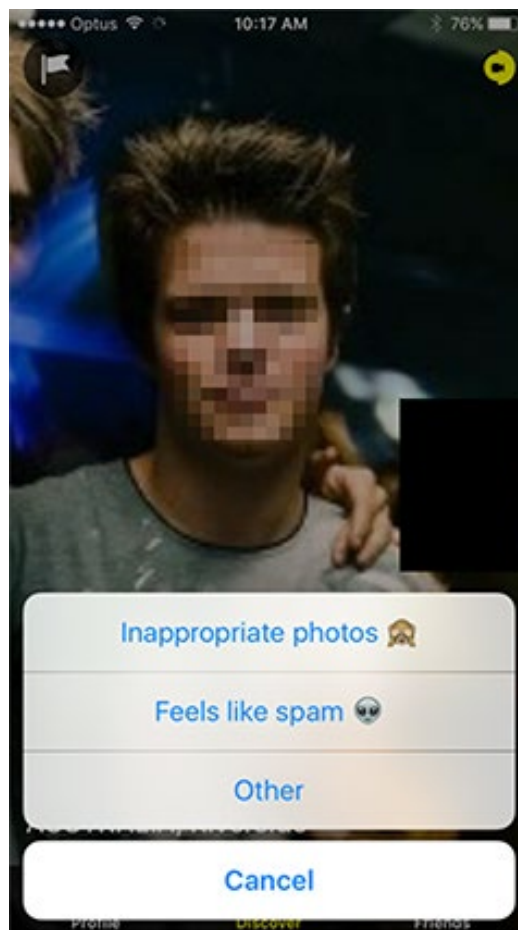
Security features the app possesses.

At the top of the screen within the yellow app is a flag. This is the device users are able to report bullies, underage or overage accounts and other issues. A click on the flag opens up a text window that allows a user several options to complete their report.

Profiles may be reported using the flag icon for: -nudity, underage users, commercial profiles, the profile is not representative of a person or for "other reasons"

User content may be reported using the <<...>> tag for:-nudity, underage, commercial or scam profiles, underage users and for 'bad behaviour' (whatever that is defined as) and for a match a user wishes to delete

One of the few positive about Yellow is that once a user has been blocked or reported their account is permanently deleted. (Or it would be positive if the verification system was any good, as it stands a new account may be made with ease)



<https://www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/games-apps-and-social-networking/yellow>

Profile pictures that include nudity are blocked by Yellow's software automatically.

The app uses its employees instead of bots to review complaints about inappropriate comments or behaviours, which may explain the loose terminology such as "bad behaviour" and "other".

Parents, guardians and legal authorities are able to contact Yellow with any concerns through safety.yellw.co. An alternative email address to contact the app is hello@yellw.co

In summary.

Yellow pinpoints where your child is at any given time, and links them up with strangers on an app(Snapchat) that has a bad reputation for sexting and cyberbullying.

napchat at least makes it difficult to meet strangers on it, Yellow just completely wipes out that safe guard Snapchat had out with its poor verification system and insistence on the use of location services. It is used predominantly for linking up strangers for random sexting.

This is one to avoid, it doesn't do much of anything and the risks are high.



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