Research
In the context of social media experienced from a Western World view, users are gravitating towards the temporary. Snapchat's "snaps" self-destruct after 10 seconds. Tweets are limited to 140 characters. Periscope videos share the same lifespan as a Mayfly. There is gravitation to the ephemeral, raising questions of why users choose to engage in this platform, how the ephemeral is delivered, and if ephemeral messaging is as secure as it is perceived to be.

What is Ephemeral Messaging?
"Ephemeral messaging is the mobile-to-mobile transmission of multimedia messages that automatically disappear from the recipient's screen after the message has been viewed. The word "ephemeral" describes something that only lasts for a short period of time."
Ephemeral messages which "self-destruct" can be contrasted with SMS text messaging and iMessage, both of which require the recipient to physically delete messages from the device.

The Disruption of of Ephemeral Messaing?
Users believe that ephemeral messaging is the form of cyber communication that most closely resembles the characteristics of "real" in-person or over-the- phone interaction. Uttered words are seldom recorded, and the images we perceive with our eyes are rarely saved and replayed. They are fleeting moments. Ephemeral messaging apps, like Snapchat, transmit the temporary, unrecorded nature of real life interactions to the digital world creating unaltered moments captured and shared in real time. Snapchat messages can only be viewed once -- and during the viewing period, the recipient must maintain contact with the device's touchscreen or the message, which is called a Snap, disappears. "The nature of these apps is that they feel more like conversation," says Colleen Wormsley of Do Something. "You send a snap and somebody sends a snap back and it goes away." Confide, an app that launched in January 2014, also borrows from human conversation. "When you think about sensitive communication, you resort to the spoken word," says Jon Brod, Confide's cofounder and president. "Digital communication is the opposite of that. We're taking this tried-and-true mechanism for communication and bringing it to digital." Snapchat has been conceptualized as a more private form of communication and is an "escape from the public one-to-many communication that is the default on Facebook" (Utz et al., 2015, p. 4). 700 million snaps are being shared everyday via its app. Its appeal appears to be in its challenge to a key uncertainty of hyperconnectvitiy: the "decay of time".

Services such as Facebook and twitter have consistently evolved to strengthen relational cohesiveness such as better functions and services to connect new people and enhance already established friendships. (Refer to Appendix) However, due to such strong levels of relational cohesiveness, many side effects have surfaced. For instance, too much information sharing between people has caused a cognitive overload of information. Furthermore, privacy has become a critical issue; users have become more sensitive about sharing private information and think twice about expanding their relationships through Social networking services. In order to solve these problems, constrained SNSs have emerged such as Snapchat which provide time constraints to their services. Snapchat takes advantage of people's psychology behind sharing and cultural trends by providing ephemeral messaging so that data is not saved eternally while still providing a platform for the act of sharing. Opposite from prior SNS where posts and content is recorded and kept on a timeline or profile, Snapchat messages, or "snaps" disappear automatically. Hence, users do not need to be concerned about what content was shared…

Does Ephemeral Messaging Raise Questions of Security?
Snapchat became the subject of an U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) investigation when it was alleged that Snapchat deceived consumers with promises about the ephemeral nature of messages sent through the service. The FTC has since ruled that Snapchat did not employ reasonable security measures to protect personal information from misuse and unauthorized disclosure. In reality, these apps are far from foolproof protectors of privacy… Richard Hickman, computer forensics examiner, found that the metadata of snaps remains and that images sent via snapchat are recoverable" Evan Spiegel, CEO of Snapchat, is keen to draw the distinction between secrecy and privacy. "Unfortunately, privacy is too often articulated as secrecy, when, as Nissenbaum points out, privacy is actually focused on an understanding of context… Privacy allows us to enjoy and learn from the intimacy that is created when we share different things with different people in different contexts." …Snapchat could be seen as facilitating secrecy from as well as privacy for its users. This trend in ephemeral messaging … is part of the hyperconnective shift to a routinized digital exchange of information about the self.

What are the characteristics of the UI/UX?
What separates ephemeral messaging platforms to others? Ones which are infact cohesive verses the ones that are impermanence? (Refer to Appendix) In terms of the UX and UI of Snapchat, there is an explicit option to select how long the messages are visible for and to whom. A time limit exists. 'Tap to display' and 'hold to record' interactions also create a sense of impermanence. They require the user to maintain a physical contact with the device in order to consume or create a message. Disconnecting from the device, even for a second, disables the process. A process that mimics real time interactions.

How is Ephemeral Messaging Used?
Other social media staples that experiment with the ephemeral are Facebook Messenger, which has done user testing on self-destructing messages. Currently available for some Android and iOS users in France, the feature allows people to send messages that vanish in an hour. In a press statement, Facebook said "Disappearing messages gives people another fun option to choose from when they communicate on Messenger. We look forward to hearing people's feedback as they give it a try." The company hasn't revealed if and when the feature will be available in other countries. The main appeal of ephemeral messages in Facebook Messenger isn't just about sending sensitive information. As TechCrunch's Josh Constine notes, **disappearing messages echo real-life conversations**, an experience Messenger has sought to duplicate with features like read receipts and its quick selfie cam.

Likewise, Instagram with the Instagram stories feature has also implemented the ephemeral to create a viewing and sharing experience similar to Snapchat. "With Instagram Stories, you don't have to worry about overposting. Instead, you can share as much as you want throughout the day _ with as much creativity as you want. You can bring your story to life in new ways with text and drawing tools. The photos and videos will disappear after 24 hours and won't appear on your profile grid or in feed," the company wrote in a blog post. Instagram CEO Kevin Systrom has acknowledged the feature's striking resemblance to one on Snapchat. "They deserve all the credit," he told TechCrunch in an interview. But he also said "This isn't about who invented something. This is about a format, and how you take it to a network and put your own spin on it."

APPENDIX
Ephemeral Messaging UI

Relational Cohesion

Low   High

Snapchat, Don't Talk   Facebook, Twitter
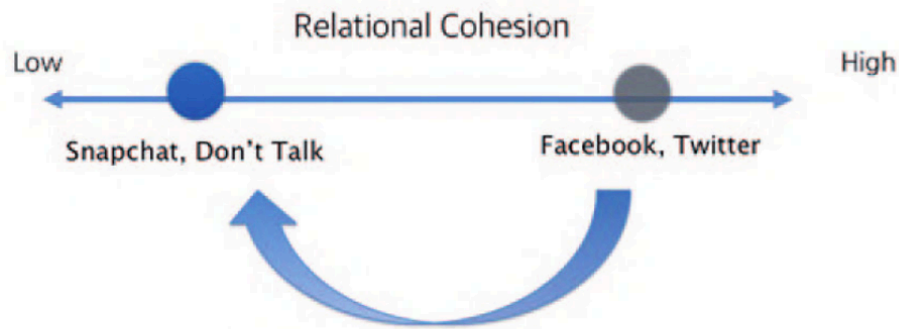
Fig. 4.10 An example of disruptive innovation in the compositional thread of experience

Screenshot Icons

A screenshot has been taken of your Snap without audio

A screenshot has been taken of your Snap with audio
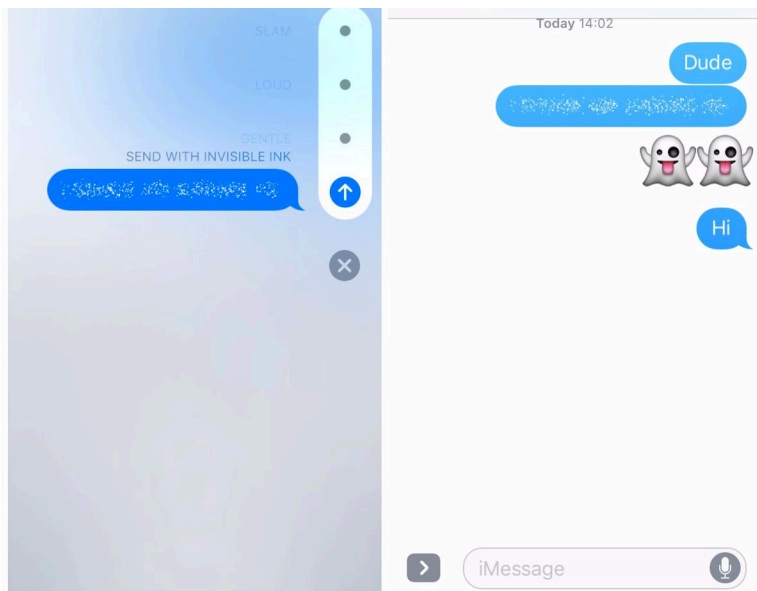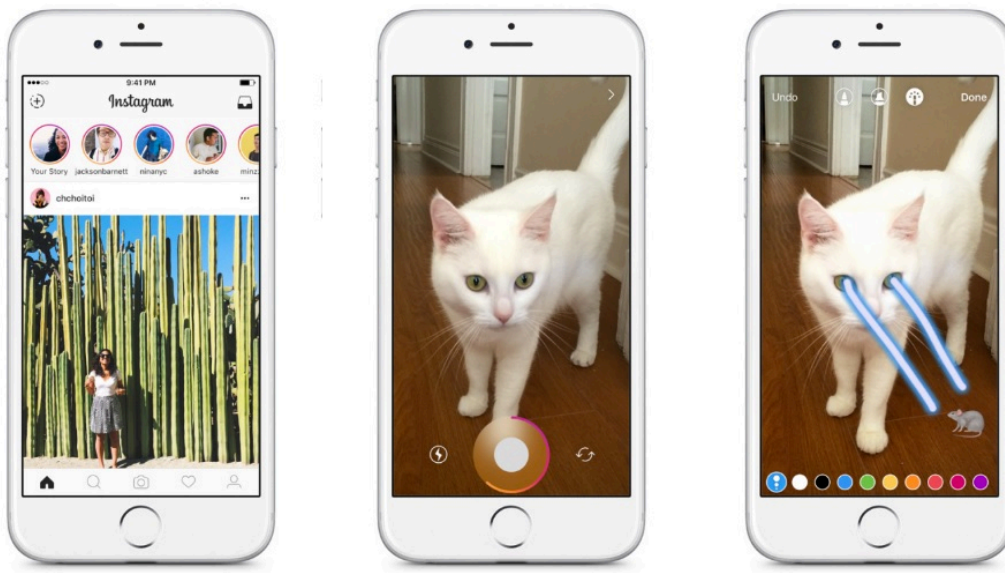
A screenshot has been taken of your Chat

Replay Icons

Your Snap sent without sound has been replayed
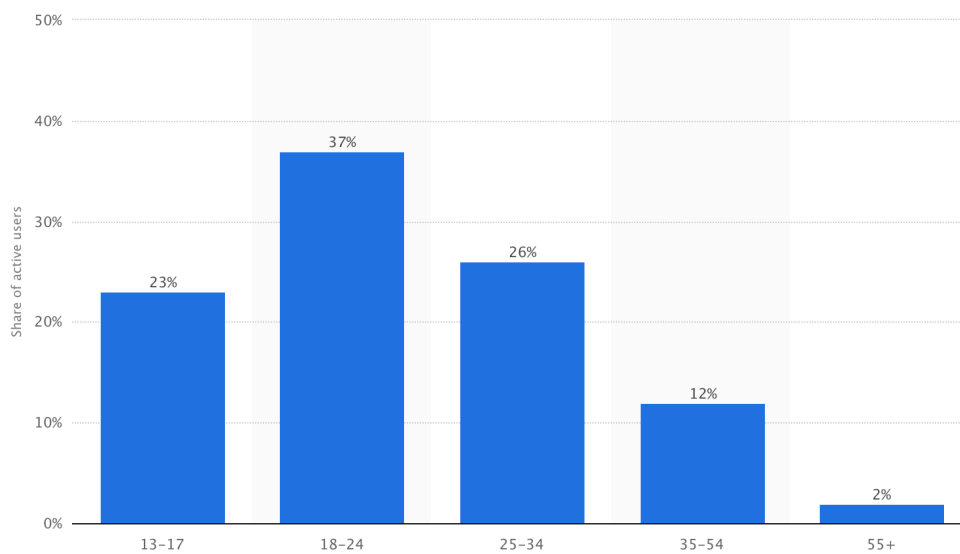
Your Snap sent with sound has been replayed

SLAM

LOUD

GENTLE
SEND WITH INVISIBLE INK

Today 14:02

Dude

Hi

iMessage

Statistics

http://www.statista.com/statistics/326452/snapchat-age-group-usa/
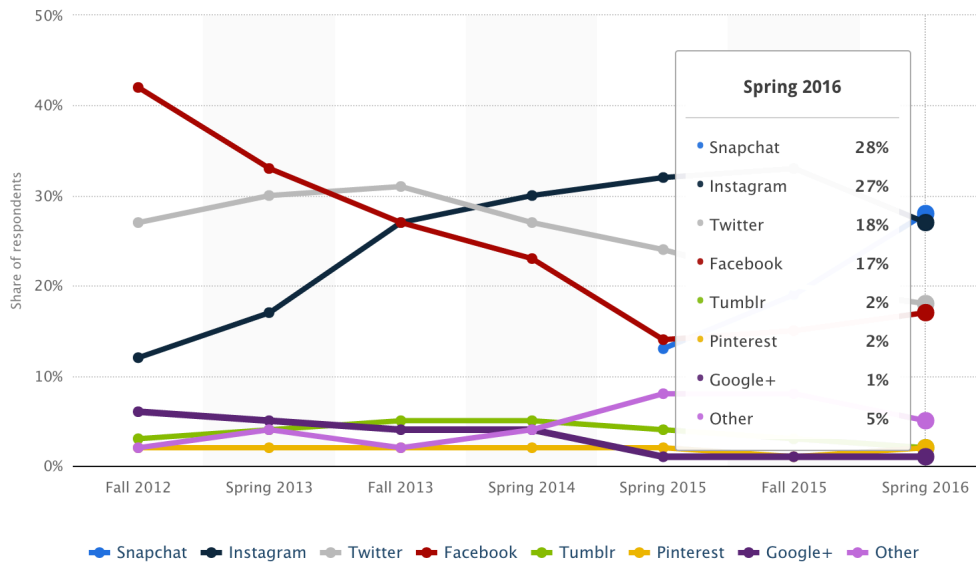
Location, Category

Today, Snapchat processes over 400 million disappearing photos, videos, and text messages on a daily basis. The application boasts approximately 100 million monthly active users, and sits comfortably among the top ten apps both in the App Store and in Google Play (US).

Everyone wants to build an ephemeral messaging app and serve it up with a twist. In the past year alone, three semi-popular ephemeral messaging startups raised over $43 million (namely: Wickr, Frankly, and Cyber Dust) while Snapchat alone raised $200 million. "Blink" is another startup in the same category that was acquired by Yahoo for an undisclosed amount; Facebook introduced its second attempt at an app for disappearing photos; and Apple is rumoured to be introducing a self-destruct feature for its native messaging app, iMessage.

Snapchat's current valuation is approximately $18 billion

From May 2015 to May 2016, Snapchat's daily video views have grown 400% over the course of the year (from 2 billion to 10 billion, according to Bloomberg).

Millennials, a demographic marketers are spending 500% more to reach than all others combined, account for over 70% of all Snapchat users

Duggan (2015) indicated that 17% of adult smartphone owners use Snapchat. Among the adult population, young adults (18–29 years old) are the age group with the largest number (41%) of Snapchat users (Duggan, 2015).

Because snaps can disappear, Snapchat has largely been discussed in popular media (see Colao, 2012) and one of the limited published papers (see Young, 2014) as a new platform for sexting (i.e., sending sexual images via text messaging). However, when European young adults (*n* = 77) were asked what content they sent via Snapchat they most frequently mentioned

that they sent funny things (98.7%), pictures of themselves (85.7%), and pictures of what they are currently doing (85.7%; Utz, Muscanell, & Cameran, 2015).

At 500 million Snapchat stories per day (calculated at 10 seconds each), it would take over 158 years to watch an entire day of Snapchat stories. According to Business Insider, users spend an average of 25-30 minutes each day on Snapchat