[Template:Pp-semi](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi" \o "Template:Pp-semi) [Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates) [Template:Infobox software](/wiki/Template:Infobox_software) **Snapchat** is an [image messaging](/wiki/Photo_sharing) and [multimedia](/wiki/Multimedia) [mobile application](/wiki/Mobile_application) created by [Evan Spiegel](/wiki/Evan_Spiegel), [Bobby Murphy](/wiki/Bobby_Murphy_(businessman)), and Reggie Brown[[1]](#cite_note-1) when they were students at [Stanford University](/wiki/Stanford_University). The company headquarters are located in [Venice, California](/wiki/Venice,_California).[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[5]](#cite_note-5) The [prototype](/wiki/Prototype) for Snapchat was started by Brown and Spiegel as a project for one of Spiegel's classes at Stanford, where Spiegel was a [product design](/wiki/Product_design) major. Beginning under the name "Picaboo", the idea was for users to communicate using images that were explicitly short-lived. When, in April 2011, Spiegel floated the product idea in front of his class as a final project, the classmates balked at the thought of temporary photos.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) Murphy was eventually brought into the project to write the [source code](/wiki/Source_code) for the application, and Picaboo first launched as an [iOS](/wiki/IOS)-only app in July 2011 from Evan Spiegel's living room (who was still staying at home with his father when not away at school). The application was relaunched two months later under the name Snapchat.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8) Snapchat evolved into a mix of private messaging and public content, including brand networks, publications, and live events such as sports and music. Nevertheless, according to survey studies conducted in March 2016, the personal oriented messaging was still being accessed by users more than the publicly offered content that was being presented. 71% of users surveyed said that they preferred the app for its chat, messaging, and imaging services, versus 5% who almost exclusively chose the various events, brand features, and celebrity content on a daily basis. 24% responded that they accessed all features equally. However, about three quarters of those surveyed were also familiar with the brand content and had a favorable opinion of those areas.[[9]](#cite_note-9) Snapchat released a new update on March 29, 2016, with a variety of new features. The release received negative feedback from many users because of the addition of "auto advancing stories," which takes control away from users who want to select the stories they would like to see, and instead feeds all video sequentially (rather than in an "on-demand" setup of previous versions). To date, Snapchat has not incorporated the ability for users to turn off the feature.[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12)[[13]](#cite_note-13)[[14]](#cite_note-14)[[15]](#cite_note-15)[[16]](#cite_note-16)[[17]](#cite_note-17)

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## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

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### Prototype[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

According to documents and [deposition](/wiki/Deposition_(law)) statements, Reggie Brown brought the idea for a disappearing pictures app to Evan Spiegel because Spiegel had prior business experience. Brown and Spiegel then pulled in Bobby Murphy, who had experience coding. The three worked closely together for several months, straight through the initial product release, until Spiegel and Murphy decided to deny Brown further access a few weeks before relaunching the app as Snapchat.[[18]](#cite_note-18) Early on, the Snapchat team focused on usability and technical aspects, rather than branding efforts.[[6]](#cite_note-6) An exception was the decision to keep a mascot designed by Brown, "Ghostface Chillah", named after [Ghostface Killah](/wiki/Ghostface_Killah) of the hip-hop group [Wu-Tang Clan](/wiki/Wu-Tang_Clan).[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[19]](#cite_note-19) On May 8, 2012, Reggie Brown sent an email to Evan Spiegel during their senior year at Stanford in which he offered to sell any former stake he'd had in the original product. Lawyers for Snapchat responded by insisting that he had never had any creative connection to the company. The attorneys also accused Brown of committing [fraud](/wiki/Fraud) against Spiegel and Murphy by falsely claiming to be a product inventor. On behalf of their clients, the law firm concluded that Brown had made no contributions of value or worth, and was therefore entitled to a share of nothing.[[20]](#cite_note-20) In their first [blog](/wiki/Blog) post, dated May 9, 2012, [CEO](/wiki/CEO) Evan Spiegel described the company mission: "Snapchat isn't about capturing the traditional [Kodak](/wiki/Kodak) moment. It's about communicating with the full range of human emotion—not just what appears to be pretty or perfect."[[21]](#cite_note-21)[[44]](#cite_note-44) A feature known as "Geofilters" was added in July 2014, which allows special graphical overlays to be available if the user is [within a certain geographical location](/wiki/Geo-fence), such as a city, event, or destination.[[45]](#cite_note-45)[[46]](#cite_note-46) The "Lens" feature, introduced in September 2015, allows users to add real-time effects into their snaps by using [face detection](/wiki/Face_detection) technology which is activated by long-pressing on a face within the viewfinder.[[47]](#cite_note-47) Snaps can be directed privately to selected contacts, or to a semi-public "Story".[[34]](#cite_note-34) The private message photo snaps can be viewed for a user-specified length of time (1 to 10 seconds) before they become inaccessible. Users were previously required to hold down on the screen in order to view a snap; this behavior was removed in July 2015.<ref name=verge-nomoreholding>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The requirement to hold on the screen was intended to frustrate the ability to take [screenshots](/wiki/Screenshot) of snaps; the Snapchat app does not prevent screenshots from being taken, but can notify the sender if it detects that it has been saved. However, these notifications can be bypassed through either unauthorized modifications to the app or by obtaining the image through external means.[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[22]](#cite_note-22)[[48]](#cite_note-48) One snap per-day can be replayed for free; additional replays can be purchased using [microtransactions](/wiki/Microtransactions).<ref name=wired-paidreplay>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Friends can be added via usernames and phone contacts, using customizable "[Snapcodes](/wiki/QR_code)", or through the "Add Nearby" function, which scans for users near their location who are also in the Add Nearby menu.[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[50]](#cite_note-50) Spiegel explained that Snapchat is intended to counteract the trend of users being compelled to manage an idealized [online identity](/wiki/Online_identity) of themselves, which he says has "taken all of the fun out of communicating".[[6]](#cite_note-6)

### Stories and Discover[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

"Stories" are viewed in chronological order, and each segment is accessible for 24 hours.[[34]](#cite_note-34) By summer 2014, photo and video snaps presented to friends in the Stories functionality had surpassed person to person private snaps as the most frequently-used function of the service, with over one billion viewed per day—double the daily views tallied in April 2014.[[51]](#cite_note-51) In June 2014, the story feature was expanded to incorporate "Our Stories", which was then changed to "Live Stories" about a year later. The feature allows users on-location at specific events (such as [music festivals](/wiki/Music_festival) or sporting events) to contribute snaps to a curated story advertised to all users. As a result, multiple contributors could be presenting the same event from varying viewpoints. These public "Stories" can also be of a more personal nature involving daily type activities of users. <ref name=verge-ourstories>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[52]](#cite_note-52)[[53]](#cite_note-53)<ref name=recode-storiesmoney>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[54]](#cite_note-54) An "Official Stories" designation was added in November 2015 to denote the public stories of notable figures and celebrities, similar to [Twitter's](/wiki/Twitter) "Verified account" program.<ref name=verge-officialstories>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

In January 2015, Snapchat introduced "Discover", an area containing channels of ad-supported short-form content from major publishers, including [BuzzFeed](/wiki/BuzzFeed), [CNN](/wiki/CNN), [ESPN](/wiki/ESPN), [Mashable](/wiki/Mashable), [*People*](/wiki/People_(magazine)), and [Vice](/wiki/Vice_Media), among others.<ref name=fastco-discover>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Advertisements are estimated to be seen 500,000 to 1,000,000 times a day.[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56)[[57]](#cite_note-57) To address data usage concerns related to these functions, a "Travel Mode" option was added in August 2015. When activated, the feature prevents the automatic downloading of snaps until they are explicitly requested by the user.[[58]](#cite_note-58)

### Messaging[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

In contrast to other messaging apps, Spiegel described Snapchat's messaging functions as being "conversational," rather than "transactional," as they sought to replicate the conversations he engaged in with friends. Spiegel stated that he did not experience conversational interactions while using the products of competitors like [iMessage](/wiki/IMessage).[[59]](#cite_note-59) Rather than a traditional online notification, a blue pulsing "Here" button is displayed within the sender's chat window if the recipient is currently viewing their own chat window. When this button is held down, a video chat function is immediately launched.[[59]](#cite_note-59) By default, messages disappear after they are read, and a notification is only sent to the recipient when they start to type.[[59]](#cite_note-59) Users can also use messages to reply to snaps that are part of a story.<ref name=verge-lenses>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The video chat feature uses technology from AddLive—a real-time communications provider that Snapchat acquired prior to the feature's launch.<ref name=verge-scaddlive>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> In regards to the "Here" indicator, Spiegel explained that "the accepted notion of an online indicator that every chat service has is really a negative indicator. It means 'my friend is available and doesn't want to talk to you,' versus this idea in Snapchat where 'my friend is here and is giving you their full attention.'" Spiegel further claimed that the Here video function prevents the awkwardness that can arise from apps that use typing indicators because, with text communication, conversations lose their fluidity as each user tries to avoid typing at the same time.[[36]](#cite_note-36)[[59]](#cite_note-59) In March 2016, [*Fortune*](/wiki/Fortune_(magazine)) reported that Snapchat had acquired [Bitstrips](/wiki/Bitstrips); the target of the purchase was its app Bitmoji, which allows users to design [stickers](/wiki/Sticker_(Internet)) featuring a personalized cartoon [avatar](/wiki/Avatar_(computing)).[[60]](#cite_note-60) On March 29, 2016, Snapchat launched a major revision of the messaging functionality known as "Chat 2.0", adding stickers, easier access to audio and video conferencing, the ability to leave audio or video "notes", and the ability to share recent camera photos. The implementation of these features are meant to allow users to easily shift between text, audio, and video chat as needed while retaining an equal level of functionality.[[61]](#cite_note-61)

## User demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

From its earliest days, Snapchat's main demographic has consisted of [millennials](/wiki/Millennials).[[62]](#cite_note-62) In 2014, researchers from the [University of Washington](/wiki/University_of_Washington) and [Seattle Pacific University](/wiki/Seattle_Pacific_University) designed a user survey to help understand how and why the application was being used. The researchers originally hypothesized that due to the ephemeral nature of Snapchat messages, its use would be predominantly for privacy-sensitive content including the much talked about potential use for sexual content and [sexting](/wiki/Sexting).[[63]](#cite_note-63) However, it appears that Snapchat is used for a variety of creative purposes that are not necessarily privacy-related at all.[[63]](#cite_note-63) In the study, only 1.6% of respondents reported using Snapchat primarily for sexting, although 14.2% admitted to having sent sexual content via Snapchat at some point.[[63]](#cite_note-63) These findings suggest that users do not seem to utilize Snapchat for sensitive content. Rather, the primary use for Snapchat was found to be for comedic content such as "stupid faces" with 59.8% of respondents reporting this use most commonly.[[63]](#cite_note-63) The researchers also determined how Snapchat users do not use the application and what types of content they are not willing to send. They found that the majority of users are not willing to send content classified as sexting (74.8% of respondents), photos of documents (85.0% of respondents), messages containing legally questionable content (86.6% of respondents), or content considered mean or insulting (93.7% of respondents).[[63]](#cite_note-63) The study results also suggested that Snapchat's success is not due to its security properties, but because the users found the application to be fun. The researchers found that users seem to be well aware (79.4% of respondents) that recovering snaps is possible and a majority of users (52.8% of respondents) report that this does not affect their behavior and use of Snapchat.[[63]](#cite_note-63) Most users (52.8% of respondents) were found to use an arbitrary timeout length on snaps regardless of the content type or recipient. The remaining respondents were found to adjust their snaps' timeout depending on the content or the recipient.[[63]](#cite_note-63) Reasons for adjusting the time length of snaps included the level of trust and relationship with the recipient, the time needed to comprehend the snap, and avoiding [screenshots](/wiki/Screenshot).[[63]](#cite_note-63)

## Business[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

### Funding and valuation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

Snapchat raised $485,000 in its [seed round](/wiki/Seed_money) and an undisclosed amount of [bridge funding](/wiki/Bridge_financing) from [Lightspeed Ventures](/wiki/Lightspeed_Ventures).[[22]](#cite_note-22) By February 2013, Snapchat confirmed a $13.5 million [Series A](/wiki/Series_A_round) funding round led by [Benchmark Capital](/wiki/Benchmark_Capital), which valued the company at between $60 million and $70 million.[[64]](#cite_note-64) In June 2013, Snapchat raised $60 million in a funding round led by venture-capital firm [Institutional Venture Partners](/wiki/Institutional_Venture_Partners),[[65]](#cite_note-65) and the firm also appointed a new high-profile board member, Michael Lynton of [Sony's](/wiki/Sony) American division.[[66]](#cite_note-66) By mid-July 2013, a media report valued the company at $860 million.[[67]](#cite_note-67) On November 14, 2013, [*The Wall Street Journal*](/wiki/The_Wall_Street_Journal) reported that Facebook offered to acquire Snapchat for $3 billion, but Spiegel declined the cash offer.[[68]](#cite_note-68) Tech writer [Om Malik](/wiki/Om_Malik) then claimed on November 15, 2013 that Google had offered $4 billion, but Spiegel again declined.[[69]](#cite_note-69) On December 11, 2013, Snapchat confirmed $50 million in Series C funding from Coatue Management.[[70]](#cite_note-70) Four more funding rounds, from December 2014 to March 2016, amounted to approximately $1.2 billion and totaled funding at $1.36 billion.[[71]](#cite_note-71) Beyond 2014, the company had achieved a valuation of $10–$20 billion, depending on the source.[[72]](#cite_note-72) According to reports in May 2016, the company's estimated worth was said to be approaching $22 billion in the event of a new round of investment.[[73]](#cite_note-73) Further reports in 2016 suggested that funding was almost at $3 billion and that Snapchat was targeting yearly revenues of a billion dollars.[[74]](#cite_note-74)

### Monetization[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

Features added to Snapchat have been used to provide [monetization](/wiki/Monetization); Snapchat's first paid advertisement, in the form of a 20-second movie trailer for the horror film [*Ouija*](/wiki/Ouija_(2014_film)), was shown to users on October 19, 2014. In addition to acknowledging Snapchat's need for a revenue stream, the company stated that it wanted to evaluate "if we can deliver an experience that's fun and informative, the way ads used to be, before they got creepy and targeted."[[75]](#cite_note-75) The "Discover" feature, which presents short-form content from publishers, also allows for paid advertising. The entity that sells the ad campaign causes the revenue distribution between Snapchat and its partner to vary, but it is estimated that advertisements are worth ten to fifteen cents per view. Furthermore, advertisements are estimated to be seen 500,000 to 1,000,000 times a day.[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56)[[57]](#cite_note-57) In June 2015, Snapchat announced that it would allow advertisers to purchase sponsored geofilters for snaps; an early customer of the offering was [McDonalds](/wiki/McDonalds), who paid for a branded geofilter covering its restaurant locations in the United States.[[45]](#cite_note-45) In October 2015, Snapchat started working with companies to create sponsored Lens filters.[[76]](#cite_note-76) In May 2016, as part of a campaign to promote [*X-Men: Apocalypse*](/wiki/X-Men:_Apocalypse), [20th Century Fox](/wiki/20th_Century_Fox) paid for the entire array of lenses to replaced by those based on characters from the [*X-Men*](/wiki/X-Men) series and films for a single day.[[77]](#cite_note-77) Ad placements can be sold within a live story, or a story can be pitched by a sponsor. Live stories are estimated to reach an average of 20 million viewers in a 24-hour span.[[78]](#cite_note-78) In September 2015, the service entered into a partnership with the [National Football League](/wiki/National_Football_League) to present live stories from selected games (including a Sunday game, and marquee games such as [Monday Night Football](/wiki/Monday_Night_Football) and [Thursday Night Football](/wiki/Thursday_Night_Football)), with both parties contributing content and handling ad sales.[[79]](#cite_note-79)[[80]](#cite_note-80) Mary Meeker, a partner at Silicon Valley venture capital firm [Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers](/wiki/Kleiner_Perkins_Caufield_&_Byers), which negotiated a financial agreement with Snapchat in August 2014,[[81]](#cite_note-81) highlighted the growth of [vertical video](/wiki/Vertical_video) viewing in her 2015 Internet Trends Report – growing from 5% of video viewing in 2010 to 29% in 2015. Vertical video ads like Snapchat's are watched in their entirety nine times more than landscape video ads.<ref name=Constine>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

In April 2016, [NBC Olympics](/wiki/NBC_Olympics) announced that it had reached a deal with Snapchat to allow stories from the [2016 Summer Olympics](/wiki/2016_Summer_Olympics) to be featured on Snapchat in the United States. The content will include a behind-the-scenes Discover channel curated by [BuzzFeed](/wiki/BuzzFeed) (a company which [NBCUniversal](/wiki/NBCUniversal) has funded), and stories featuring a combination of footage from NBC, athletes, and attendees. NBC will sell advertising and enter into revenue sharing agreements. This marks the first time NBC has allowed Olympics footage to be featured on a third-party property.[[82]](#cite_note-82)

## Privacy and security[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

### December 2013 hack[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

Snapchat was hacked on December 31, 2013.[[83]](#cite_note-83)[[84]](#cite_note-84) Gibson Security, an Australian security firm, had disclosed an API security vulnerability to the company on August 27, 2013,[[85]](#cite_note-85)[[86]](#cite_note-86) and then made public the source code for the exploit on Christmas Day (Australian time; Christmas Eve in the US).[[87]](#cite_note-87)[[88]](#cite_note-88) On December 27, Snapchat announced that it had implemented mitigating features.[[89]](#cite_note-89) Nonetheless, an anonymous group hacked them, saying that the mitigating features presented only "minor obstacles".[[90]](#cite_note-90)[[91]](#cite_note-91) The hackers revealed parts of approximately 4.6 million Snapchat usernames and phone numbers on a website named "SnapchatDB.info"[[84]](#cite_note-84)[[92]](#cite_note-92)[[93]](#cite_note-93) and sent a statement to the popular technology blog [*TechCrunch*](/wiki/TechCrunch) saying that their objective had been to "raise public awareness ... and ... put public pressure on Snapchat" to fix the vulnerability.[[92]](#cite_note-92) Snapchat apologized a week after the hack.[[94]](#cite_note-94)

### Screenshots and FTC[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

Snapchat's privacy statement originally claimed Snapchat is "the fastest way to share a moment with friends. You control how long your friends can view your message – simply set the timer up to ten seconds and send. They'll have that long to view your message and then it disappears forever. We'll let you know if they take a screenshot!"[[95]](#cite_note-95) [Federal Trade Commission](/wiki/Federal_Trade_Commission) chairwoman Edith Ramirez commented on Snapchat's privacy stating "If a company markets privacy and security as key selling points in pitching its service to consumers, it is critical that it keep those promises."[[96]](#cite_note-96) The FTC claims Snapchat "made multiple misrepresentations" about the application, including the longevity of photos and videos users sent. The agency's complaint cites workarounds users employ to avoid Snapchat's screenshot detection, as well as third-party apps that save photos or videos indefinitely.[[96]](#cite_note-96) Snapchat is designed so that private photos and videos will disappear after a predetermined amount of time set by the sender. However, users have found ways to keep photos after their intended time. One of the primary ways Snapchat users keep photos is through taking a screenshot. Users can take screenshots by capturing a photo of their screen while the snap is showing.[[95]](#cite_note-95) Snapchat's response to this potential privacy breach is to notify the sender.[[97]](#cite_note-97) However, the concern of the FTC is not only the possibility of screenshots, but also the workarounds users employ to avoid Snapchat's screenshot detection and applications that save photos or videos permanently. Many technology blogs online give a step-by-step walk-through of how to avoid detection and save snaps. The most popular way is through a variety of applications available on the App Store. The most well known applications are Snapkeep, SnapBox and SnapSpy.[[97]](#cite_note-97) Snapkeep integrates with the Snapchat application so that all unopened snaps are displayed. The snaps can then be saved to the users camera roll with the touch of one button.[[97]](#cite_note-97) SnapBox and SnapSpy are the same concept, but the applications function on a coin-based system, meaning that you must pay one coin for each snap you save.[[97]](#cite_note-97) Additionally, photographs or video recordings may be taken using a second device of a snap displayed by Snapchat.[[98]](#cite_note-98) Snapchat's response to concerns over the potential for screenshots and saved snaps going undetected stated, "Although we attempt to delete image data as soon as possible after the message is transmitted, we cannot guarantee that the message contents will be deleted in every case. For example, users may take a picture of the message contents with another imaging device or capture a screenshot of the message contents on the device screen. Consequently, we are not able to guarantee that your messaging data will be deleted in all instances. Messages, therefore, are sent at the risk of the user."[[95]](#cite_note-95) Snapchat settled with the FTC over these privacy and security claims and under the terms of the settlement, Snapchat will face independent monitoring for 20 years. Furthermore, the FTC claims that Snapchat is prohibited from "misrepresenting the extent to which it maintains the privacy, security, or confidentiality of users' information."[[96]](#cite_note-96) Snapchat's updated privacy page states that the company "can't guarantee that messages will be deleted within a specific timeframe." [[99]](#cite_note-99) Even after Snapchat deletes message data from their servers, that same data may remain in backup for a certain period of time.[[99]](#cite_note-99) In a public blog post, the service warned that "If you've ever tried to recover lost data after accidentally deleting a drive or maybe watched an episode of [*CSI*](/wiki/CSI_(TV_series)), you might know that with the right forensic tools, it's sometimes possible to retrieve data after it has been deleted."[[100]](#cite_note-100)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

* [Comparison of instant messaging clients](/wiki/Comparison_of_instant_messaging_clients)
* [Ephemera](/wiki/Ephemera) – any transitory written or printed matter not meant to be retained or preserved
* [List of virtual communities with more than 100 million active users](/wiki/List_of_virtual_communities_with_more_than_100_million_active_users)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

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## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

* [Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

* [Template:Official website](/wiki/Template:Official_website)

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[Category:2011 establishments in the United States](/wiki/Category:2011_establishments_in_the_United_States) [Category:Android (operating system) software](/wiki/Category:Android_(operating_system)_software) [Category:Internet properties established in 2011](/wiki/Category:Internet_properties_established_in_2011) [Category:IOS software](/wiki/Category:IOS_software) [Category:Photo sharing](/wiki/Category:Photo_sharing) [Category:Privately held companies in the United States](/wiki/Category:Privately_held_companies_in_the_United_States) [Category:Social networking services](/wiki/Category:Social_networking_services) [Category:Proprietary cross-platform software](/wiki/Category:Proprietary_cross-platform_software)