**Slide 1 and 2: Title Slide and why are we here**

Hi, my name is William and my partner is Joe. Today, we’ll be talking about the platform Sarahah and what led to its eventual downfall. We’re here to tell you all about Sarahah and what happened to it. I’m sure many of you have heard of Sarahah when it first came out and became popular but for those of you who don’t know what Sarahah is, it’s a platform where people can make anonymous comments to others. In Arabic, Sarahah translates to honesty or frankness. Sarahah started in 2016 in Saudi Arabia and it was supposed to be a way to provide anonymous feedback in a workplace. **\*\*Read quote on 2nd slide\*\*** So for example it was supposed to be a way for employees to compliment other employees to their bosses or to other employees, or they could provide constructive criticism with the aim to facilitate improvement. Sarahah was often compared to platforms such as ask.fm, Yik Yak and Formspring, which are also platforms where you can make an anonymous comment. Those platforms also slowly disappeared after they were released.

**Slide 3: What makes it a platform?**

So as we mentioned in class, a platform generally consists of a user base and without users, platforms don’t really exist. Sarahah’s platform allows users to make anonymous posts and comments to I guess kind of everyone. The CEO of Sarahah, Zain Alabdin Tawfiq, said that they built Sarahah to be a platform for people to feel comfortable sharing and receiving honest and helpful feedback, whether that be in regards to the workplace or simply between two friends. The app is free to download and use, and although seemingly anybody could make an account, Sarahah’s CEO has stated that it was not intended to be used by children/teens. Sarahah considered itself as a self-development platform, meaning that as the users use the platform, the api learns its users behavior and takes countermeasures to prevent harmful and unwanted users. As a result of Sarahah’s mission and its users, it created the platform which we know as Sarahah.

**Slide 4: What made it popular?**

Unlike many new digital platforms hitting the market, Sarahah reached worldwide success and recognition almost instantly. The app launched on the U.S. app store on June 13th, 2017, and by July 17th, just one month, it was the most downloaded app on the app store. Sarahah blew up mainly because of two things: Snapchat and giving users the ability to be anonymous. Being anonymous meant that people didn’t have to fear what others would say about that person if they said something weird or mean. Like if someone were to tell me that I was dumb through Facebook Messenger, I could tell people and they wouldn’t like that person anymore. With Sarahah, people didn’t have to worry about judgement and could essentially say whatever they want to whoever they want without consequences. Unlike other platforms like ask.fm, you also couldn’t respond to the comments and such in Sarahah. This meant that if people wanted to share or respond to comments and questions, they would have to screenshot the comment and then post it on a social media site like Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat. And snapchat was actually what got it to become really popular. While Sarahah was becoming popular, Snapchat added a feature that allowed people to add a link and go directly to that link within snapchat. So what someone would do is register for an account, share the link for people to post on their Sarahah on their snapchat story allowing people to swipe up and go to that link and comment anonymously. This became a viral sensation that summer, and Sarahah actually became immensely popular among American teenagers. So with the addition of link sharing on Snapchat and most likely other social media platforms, sarahah became a hit.

**Slide 5: Why did it lose engagement?**

As many of you probably know or can assume, giving people access to leaving anonymous comments can easily lead to negative comments. This meant that cyberbullying became a frequent issue on Sarahah and even though Sarahah denied these claims and said their technology can counter or prevent cyberbullying, it was still a prevalent issue. Sarahah said that their platform removes negative comments through keyword filters, however Some of the cyberbullying that slipped through the filter included provoking suicide, racism, and sexual harrassment, just to name a few. \*\*READ quote on 5th slide\*\* One mother living in Australia created a petition on change.org calling for the app to be removed from both the app store and play store after she found out her 13 year old daughter was being horrifically bullied on the app. This petition quickly gained over 470,000 supporters, and the app was quickly removed. There were also security problems with the app. A security researcher found that the app automatically uploads emails and phone numbers from your phone to their servers. This was automatically done with android devices but you had to allow access to contacts for Apple devices. The CEO said that it was for the find friends feature but the tracking feature was removed shortly after, as people were complaining about getting spam phone calls. To this day, Sarahah actually still exists but is still not available in the App Store and Google play. The website is still accessible but I think it’s only mainly used in Saudi Arabia.

**Slide 6: What was its business model?**

Sarahah got most of its users through word of mouth and social media. As we mentioned earlier, that’s also what made Sarahah popular. When people would see others using the app on Snapchat, many would feel inclined to join the service themselves. I couldn’t find much regarding their actual business model because they didn’t have a business model that generated a steady revenue. They did make money through advertisements and data collection, however like I said before this didn’t make them much revenue. But as far as how they got their users, Snapchat helped out tremendously with the popularity.

**Slide 7: Conclusion**

So after all Sarahah fell, the CEO made another app like Sarahah and named it enoff. I couldn’t find much information on Enoff, which leads me to believe that the app did not turn out to be successful. In conclusion, I think Sarahah was bound to fail just because human nature in regards to using anonymity to talk to people, especially on the internet, almost always leads to negativity and bullying. Due to this, Sarahah will always be looked back on as an app that facilitated cyber bullying. I think that if someone were to try to make a similar platform to Sarahah, it would likely fail too just because it follows the same anonymous business model, and other platforms like itself have failed as well. They also needed to think of different methods of generating revenue other than solely relying on collecting user data and selling it or advertisements to make money. I hope you guys learned a lot about Sarahah and how anonymous platforms like it seem to be likely bound to fail. Thank you! Does anybody have any questions?