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Report on

“Snapchat: A Deep Dive into its Features, User Engagement, and Impact”

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DEPARTMENT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & DATA SCIENCE
AISSMS IOIT Pune
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the report entitled “ **Snapchat** ” submitted by student **Snehal Sandip Mane (B-12)** is a record of work carried out by him/her, in partial fulfillment of requirement for Second Year of Engineering AI-DS at AISSMS IOIT Pune 411001. This work is done during the academic year 2023-2024, under our guidance.

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Place: Pune

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Index

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. Abstract
 - 1.2. Background of Snapchat
2. Project Overview
 - 2.1. Core Features of Snapchat
 - 2.2. User Demographics and Engagement
3. Project Objectives
 - 3.1. Main Objectives
 - 3.2. Specific Objectives
4. Project Scope
5. Project Timeline
6. Team
7. Risks
8. Budget
9. Project Deliverables
10. Conclusion
11. References



Abstract

This report provides an analysis of Snapchat, focusing on its core features, user engagement strategies, and its broader impact on social media and user behavior.

It examines the platform's unique offerings like ephemeral messaging and augmented reality lenses, and evaluates its success in attracting and retaining users, particularly among younger demographics.

The report also considers the potential risks and challenges associated with the platform, such as privacy concerns and the impact on mental health.

Background of Snapchat

Snapchat is a multimedia messaging app developed by Snap Inc. It was created by Evan Spiegel, Bobby Murphy, and Reggie Brown, and was initially released in September 2011.

The app's primary concept revolves around ephemeral messaging, where photos and videos (called "Snaps") are only available for a short time before they become inaccessible to the recipient.

This concept was a significant departure from traditional social media platforms that focus on permanent posts and profiles. Snapchat gained rapid popularity, especially among younger users, due to its unique features and focus on spontaneous, visual communication.



Project Overview

Core Features of Snapchat

Snapchat offers a variety of distinctive features that contribute to its popularity:

- **Snaps** – Photos/videos sent to friends or added to your Story.
- **Stories** – 24-hour collections of Snaps viewable by friends.
- **Lenses** – AR effects that modify faces or add animations.
- **Filters** – Visual overlays for color, time, location, etc.
- **Chat** – Text messaging inside the app.
- **Discover** – Content from creators, celebs, and media.
- **Spotlight** – User-submitted short videos, like TikTok.
- **Snap Map** – Shows friends' locations (if shared) on a live map.

User Demographics and Engagement

Snapchat's user base is predominantly young, with a significant portion being teenagers and young adults. The platform's focus on visual communication and ephemeral content fosters a high level of user engagement.

Users are encouraged to interact frequently with the app to capture and share moments, view Stories, and communicate with friends.



Project Objectives

Main Objectives

- Analyze the key features of Snapchat and their impact on user behavior.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Snapchat's user engagement strategies.
- Assess the social and cultural impact of Snapchat.

Specific Objectives

- Identify and describe Snapchat's core features (Snaps, Stories, Lenses, etc.).
- Examine the demographics of Snapchat users.
- Analyze how Snapchat fosters user engagement.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using Snapchat.
- Investigate the impact of Snapchat on social trends and communication.
- Explore the privacy and security concerns related to Snapchat.



Project Scope

- **Ephemeral Messaging:** Core focus on photos/videos disappearing after a short time.
- **Visual Communication:** Emphasis on sharing via photos and videos.
- **Relative Privacy:** Aim for less permanence in sharing compared to other platforms.

Key Differences from Today's Snapchat

- **Stories:** Expanded from individual messaging to 24-hour broadcasting.
- **Discover:** Moved beyond personal communication to include media consumption.
- **Lenses/Filters:** Added AR entertainment and creativity.
- **Snap Map/Spotlight:** Increased functionality with location sharing and public content.

In essence, while the original scope was about ephemeral, visual, and somewhat more private personal communication, Snapchat's scope has grown to include:

- Broadcasting and content creation
- Media consumption
- Entertainment and augmented reality
- Location-based services
- A platform for creators and businesses



Actual Project Timeline of Snapchat

Milestone	Date	Highlight
Launch as Picaboo	July 2011	Initial release on iOS
Rebranded to Snapchat	Sep 2011	Relaunched with disappearing messages
Android Version Released	Oct 2012	Expanded to Android users
Stories Introduced	Oct 2013	24-hour photo/video stories added
Chat & Video Call	May 2014	Messaging and video calling launched
Discover Launched	Jan 2015	Media content platform introduced
AR Lenses Introduced	Sep 2015	Real-time face filters added
Bitmoji Integration	Jul 2016	Personalized avatars included
Snap Map Feature	Jun 2017	Real-time location sharing added
My AI Chatbot	Mar 2023	AI assistant powered by ChatGPT introduced



Project Team of Snapchat

Name	Role	Contribution
Evan Spiegel	Co-founder & CEO	Came up with the idea, led product design & business
Bobby Murphy	Co-founder & CTO	Developed the app's backend and infrastructure
Reggie Brown	Co-founder (initial concept contributor)	Suggested the idea of disappearing photos (later ousted)
Imran Khan	Chief Strategy Officer (2015–2018)	Led Snap's monetization and IPO strategy
Tim Sehn	VP of Engineering	Scaled Snapchat's engineering and infrastructure
Joanna Coles	Board Member	Provided media and content strategy
Eitan Pilipski	Head of Camera Platform (AR Lenses)	Led development of AR, Lenses, and Snap camera features



Risks

1. Market Competition

- Snapchat faces strong competition from platforms like Instagram, and Facebook, which frequently replicate its features (e.g., Stories).
- Risk of losing user base if competitors provide similar tools with better reach or ease of use.

2. Privacy & Data Security Concerns

- Since Snapchat deals with ephemeral and personal content, any data breach or misuse could damage user trust.
- Handling of location data (Snap Map) and user behavior tracking poses regulatory and ethical risks.

3. User Safety and Content Moderation

- Potential for cyberbullying, inappropriate content, or misuse due to disappearing messages.

4. Technical Glitches and Downtime

- As a real-time platform, any server crash, app bug, or downtime could result in user frustration and reputation damage.
- Risk increases with frequent feature updates and AR integration.

5. Innovation Risk

- Constant innovation is expected, but new features may fail to engage users or cause backlash.
- Overcomplicating the app could make it less intuitive, driving users away.



Actual Budget of Snapchat (Early to Growth Phase)

Stage	Year	Amount	Purpose / Notes
Seed Funding	2012	~\$485,000	Early development and team building
Series A	Feb 2013	\$13.5 million	Led by Benchmark Capital for scaling infrastructure
Series B	June 2013	\$60 million	App growth and global expansion
Series C – G	2014–2016	Over \$2.5 billion	Investments in AR, Discover, Spectacles, acquisitions
IPO (Initial Public Offering)	Mar 2017	Raised \$3.4 billion	Valued at ~\$24 billion on NYSE



Estimated Development & Operational Costs (Per Month during scaling phase):

Category	Estimated Cost
Cloud Services (AWS/Google Cloud)	\$1–2 million/month
Engineering & R&D	\$500,000+
AR & AI Tech (Lenses, Bitmoji)	\$250,000+
Marketing & User Acquisition	\$1 million+



Project Deliverables

1. Core Application

Snapchat is a **mobile app** available on both iOS and Android. It allows users to send **photos and videos (Snaps)** that **disappear** after being viewed. It also includes features like:

- **Chat:** Real-time messaging with friends.
- **Stories:** A way to share daily updates that last for 24 hours.
- **Filters:** Visual effects users can apply to their photos or videos.

2. Augmented Reality (AR) Tools

Snapchat is famous for its **AR Lenses and Filters**, which let users:

- Add fun and interactive effects to their faces or surroundings in real time.
- Use advanced **camera technology** that tracks movement and facial features for smooth AR effects.

3. Innovative Features

Snapchat introduced several features that became trends:

- **Stories:** Content that disappears in 24 hours—now used by Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.
- **Discover:** A section showing curated content from big brands, news outlets, and influencers.
- **Snap Map:** Lets users share their location and see what others are snapping around the world.



Conclusion

Snapchat has emerged as a transformative force in the realm of social media, redefining how people communicate and express themselves digitally. With its pioneering concept of **ephemeral messaging**, the app introduced a fresh and engaging way for users—especially younger demographics—to share moments without the pressure of permanence.

The introduction of features like **Stories**, **augmented reality filters**, and **Snap Map** further strengthened Snapchat's identity as a platform centered around creativity, real-time interaction, and immersive experiences.

From a technological standpoint, Snapchat has shown continuous innovation, incorporating **artificial intelligence**, **machine learning**, and **augmented reality** to enhance user engagement and personalize the app experience. These advancements align with global initiatives such as **UN SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure**, showcasing Snapchat's role in pushing digital boundaries.

Looking ahead, Snapchat's success will depend on its ability to adapt to changing user expectations, innovate responsibly, and foster a secure, inclusive environment. Further research and long-term studies are essential to evaluate how platforms like Snapchat influence communication styles, social behavior, and digital well-being in the modern era.



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