

Snapchat's Signature "Delete" Not so Snappy, Federal Trade Commission Alleges

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[Snapchat](#) became wildly popular in recent years for its promise that users could send any text or picture they wanted on smart phones and, once they'd been viewed, the app would make them disappear.

Yet according to the [Federal Trade Commission](#), that's not necessarily true.

The FTC [slammed Snapchat with a number of allegations](#), asserting that the developer “deceived consumers over the amount of personal data it collected and the security measures taken to protect that data.”

Snapchat agreed to settle with the FTC, which required the developer to revamp its claims about privacy, security and confidentiality of users’ information. The company also must create a new privacy program that will be monitored by a third party for the next 20 years.

“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,” said FTC Chairwoman Edith Ramirez. “Any company that makes misrepresentations to consumers about its privacy and security practices risks FTC action.”

The FTC's complaint alleged that Snapchat:

- “stored video snaps in such a way they were easily accessible to the recipients beyond their expiration date if the recipient simply hooked their phone up to a computer.
- “deceptively told users they would be notified if a recipient took a screenshot of a snap. In fact, recipients with Apple devices using operating systems pre-dating iOS 7 could use a simple method to evade the app’s screenshot detection.
- “transmitted geolocation information from users of its Android app, despite saying in its privacy policy that it did not track or access such information.”
- “claimed the app only collected user’s email, phone number and Facebook ID to find friends. Despite these representations, when iOS users entered their phone number, Snapchat also collected the names and phone numbers of all the contacts in their mobile device address books.

Further, the FTC alleged, Snapchat’s lack of security in its Find Friends feature allowed hackers to access the developer’s database of 4.6 million usernames and phone numbers. That breach could lead Snapchat customers to experience costly spam, phishing, and other unsolicited communications, the FTC alleged.

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<http://www.govtech.com/applications/Snapchats-Signature-delete-not-so-snappy-Federal-Trade-Commission-Alleges.html>