



## **2022 ETHICS TEAM EVENT**

### **ETHICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA: WHERE IS THE LINE?**

Snapchat is one of the most popular social media apps, especially among teens. What sets Snapchat apart is that the messages – text or image – disappear after a set time limit.

The Snapchat app is quite popular with around 300 million daily users. However, it has received some negative attention. Many people are concerned that there is no record of postings since messages disappear. This makes it hard to prove that messages were even sent. Also, when messages disappear, they seem less serious and permanent. Students often say hurtful things without thinking since there don't appear to be any consequences.

Social media allows people to hide behind a screen. They say things they normally would not say to someone's face. When the message disappears, people take even less care with their words. These messages are hard to monitor.

Some people blame Snapchat itself. The app makes it easier to bully others. It makes it harder to catch bullies in the act. Snapchat has a policy against this behavior, and users can report bullying. The company can remove accounts when bullying occurs. However, students still face bullying on the app. How much ethical responsibility does a social media platform have when it comes to the way its users behave?



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### CASE STUDY

Layla works for Snapchat. She handles customer questions and issues. Sometimes, she deals with accounts that have been reported. These users might have been harassed or bullied.

One day, Layla receives an email from a woman named Stacy. Stacy's son Jay has been the victim of bullying on Snapchat. Stacy tells Layla the names of Jay's classmates who have bullied him. She says that these students use the app to post embarrassing photos of Jay. They send the photos around with hurtful captions.

Jay is often told about the photos or sees them on other students' phones. He does not receive the photos himself, so he can't take screenshots. Jay cannot prove that the harassment is occurring. The messages disappear too quickly. He has gone to the principal, but the bullies deny it.

Stacy asks Layla to help her find proof. "I know the images are deleted, but the bullying is taking place on your app," Stacy writes. "Can you help me prove that my son is being bullied? Do you have files that show all of the horrible things that are being said about my son?"

Layla knows that she cannot give Stacy any files. However, Stacy told her the bullies' names. She could suspend their accounts. Layla feels that her company should be held responsible for enabling bullies. However, this would go against Snapchat's rules. Does Layla have a responsibility to stop the bullying? Or should she stick to the company's rules?

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What ethical issues is Layla facing?
- What would you do?
- Are disappearing messages ethical? Should they exist at all?
- Should companies monitor their users?
- How could companies like Snapchat prevent bullying?

**Please follow the event guidelines to prepare your response, which can be found at:**

[https://mideca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/22event\\_eth\\_guidelines.pdf](https://mideca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/22event_eth_guidelines.pdf)