

Snapchat weaves ads into vanishing message service

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The logo of mobile app "Snapchat", who recently announced ads will be woven into its service, is displayed on a tablet on January 2, 2014 in Paris

Snapchat on Friday said it will begin weaving ads into the popular service for sending ephemeral smartphone messages, but promised not to be "rude" to its members.

The first Snapchat ads were to appear in the United States this weekend

in a section of the service devoted to "recent updates," the Los Angeles-based startup said in a blog post.

"We won't put advertisements in your personal communication—things like Snaps or Chats. That would be totally rude," Snapchat said.

"We want to see if we can deliver an experience that's fun and informative, the way ads used to be, before they got creepy and targeted."

The new ads will be the first paid content at Snapchat. Users will have the option of ignoring ads, which will automatically disappear after being viewed or within 24 hours, according to Snapchat.

The startup said the reason for dabbling with advertising is simply that it needs to make money.

"Advertising allows us to support our service while delivering neat content to Snapchatters," the blog post said..

The introduction of [ads](#) comes just weeks after a huge trove of evidently intercepted Snapchat images and videos were exposed online, raising fears about what may be revealed in messages intended to vanish seconds after being viewed.

In what was referred to as "The Snapping," people who used a third-party program instead of the official Snapchat application had copies of supposedly transient missives squirreled away by hackers who began posting them online.

About half of Snapchat users are reported to be 17 years old or younger, raising worries that sexy self-shot images they thought would disappear will be shared on the Internet in what would amount to child

pornography.

Snapchat assured users that the startup's servers were not breached, nor were they the source of the leaked images.

Outside applications eyed as sources for purloined Snapchat pictures are designed to let users undermine the intent of the service by keeping copies of self-destructing pictures sent or received.

Snapchat rocketed to popularity, especially among teens, after the initial app was released in September 2011. Created by then Stanford University students, the app allows the sending of messages that disappear shortly after being viewed.

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