

Snapchat "Yellow Face" lens slapped as offensive

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Vanishing message app Snapchat made a photo lens quickly disappear after an online uproar branding it an offensive stereotype of Asians worthy of the label "Yellow Face."

The lens overlaid faces in photos with cartoon visages featuring slanted eyes, wide cheeks and toothy grins.

Snapchat pulled the lens after its release on Tuesday ignited concerns it was insulting and racist.

Snapchat said the lens was meant as a playful take on anime characters and promised it would not return to circulation.

"Snapchat virtualized old-timey yellow face without thinking about how it effects E-Asians," read a Twitter message fired off by the account of @brtnyle.

"It's disappointing whether it was deliberate or not."

Southern California-based Snapchat was hit with similar charges of being racially insensitive earlier this year after releasing a Bob Marley filter that people could use to add graphics of dreadlocks to photos.

The filter which Snapchat said it designed in the spirit of the late reggae star also modified facial features and darkened skin tone.

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The number of people using Snapchat in the United States will leap more than 27 percent this year to 58.6 million, meaning that nearly one in five people in the country will be using the service, according to an eMarketer forecast.

By the year 2020, the ranks of US Snapchat users were expected to swell

to 85.5 million, according to the report.

Snapchat estimates it has more than 100 million users globally of the service for sending videos, images and text messages which vanish after being viewed. Some reports say it generates 10 billion video views per day.

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