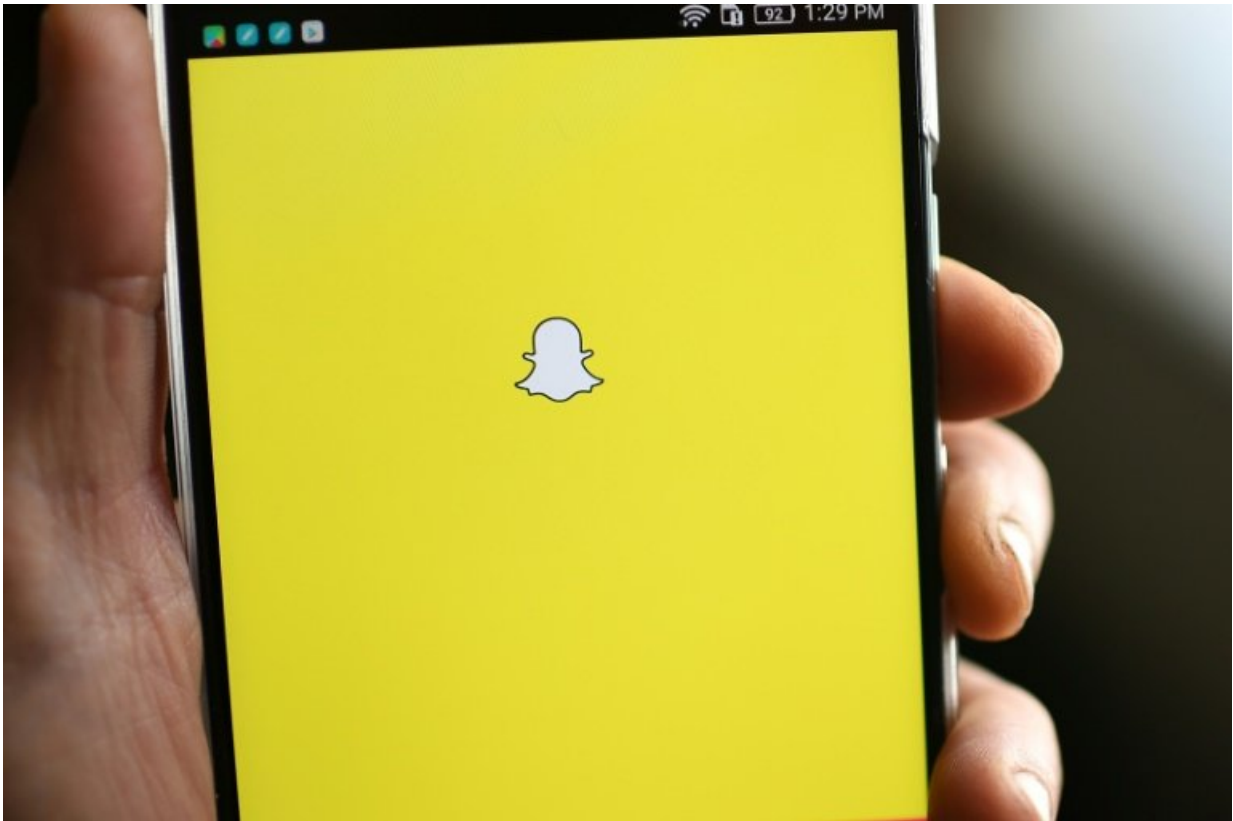


Snapchat unveils new original shows under own brand

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Snapchat is launching original video programs as part of an effort to keep pace with social network rivals

The youth-focused social network Snapchat announced Wednesday it was launching a new slate of original video shows under its own brand in

the latest move to spark growth.

The shows unveiled under the Snap Originals brand include a new comedy, a mystery thriller and a "docuseries" following rising stars in Laguna Beach, California.

Snapchat parent firm Snap Inc. joins internet rivals Facebook, Apple and Google-owned YouTube in developing its own original videos which may be watched on a variety of devices.

Last year, Snap announced plans to release original scripted shows under a partnership with NBCUniversal, but Wednesday's announcement establishes its own brand.

"Snap Originals will also feature new Show Portals, letting you swipe up and step inside a scene from a Show to experience it for yourself," a company statement said.

"Snap Originals will also have Lenses, Filters, and other fun ways for you to share the show experience with your friends."

Snapchat is among the most popular social networks for young smartphone users but its user growth has stalled since its publish share offering last year, as Facebook and its Instagram network began offering similar services.

The service became known for its disappearing smartphone messages but recently has stepped up efforts to broaden its user base and improve engagement with content on its Discover platform, which has short videos from its media partners in sports, entertainment and news.

The new shows include Co-Ed, a comedy from the Duplass Brothers known for their HBO programs; Class of Lies, a thriller involving

college students with a true-crime podcast; and Endless Summer, a documentary series following rising stars from the creators of "Keeping Up with the Kardashians."

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