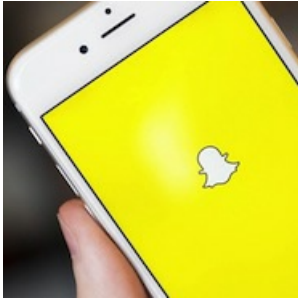


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## Marketers should hold off until Snapchat privacy backlash blows over

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*Snapchat*

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By **Brielle Jaekel**

Snapchat's recent privacy update, allowing it to share user content with marketers, is inciting a backlash that will eventually fade, but marketers should still be wary of using these images too soon.

The mobile media-messaging platform is one of many successful social media platforms to withstand repercussions surrounding a privacy policy update, signifying the controversy will be short lived. However, marketers looking to tap into the user-generated content should not jump in to using the photos within advertising right away but instead focus on its insight possibilities.

"Snapchat has not gone too far, especially since they have clarified the policy," said Matt Rednor, CEO and founder at Decoded Advertising. "There will be some short-term backlash, but nothing that will affect them long-term.

"Instagram angered users with its original ad terms a few years ago, but that did not stop it from becoming one of the top platforms today," he said. "For users, it means that anything posted on the Internet continues to have a record and could possibly resurface one day, even if deleted.

"We will see people be a little more cautious about what they post now."

### The outrage machine

Consumers have seen many privacy policy updates when it comes to social media, as platforms become larger they look to gain more monetary value. Snapchat is looking to capitalize on its users' pictures and videos by selling them to advertisers likely to incorporate it in public marketing. Users have been taking to other social media platforms to express their concern and anger over the adjustment to the privacy policy.

It is a scary thought for users of a platform, where pictures originally disappeared within 24 hours, to be told that they can appear within marketing content or be used in other ways. Instagram and Facebook have both received significant backlash surround similar privacy updates, but they still remain big players in the social media game.

However, while the controversy ensues marketers looking to tap into this content to showcase within advertising should wait until far after the frenzy blows over. Consumers seeing their content being used amongst outrage of the policy will likely have an opposite reaction than what advertisers are looking for, in turn causing a negative brand image.

Marketers and Snapchat should be leveraging the content to gain insight on their users and what is successful within marketing. For instance, looking at these pictures and videos can show which filters are boasting well with consumers and how to recreate the success.

Snapchat was quick to explain the meaning of the update in an attempt to contain the outrage. But since this has been a common issue, social media platforms should be keen on getting a preemptive head start on clarification and sharing what it means for users along with the policy changes.▫

"I would not want to be a brand using these pictures right now," Mr. Rednor said. "The user backlash that will be associated with people first seeing their photos in ads will definitely outweigh the PR story of being the first brand to use Snapchats in an ad.

"I would be comfortable using the content for research purposes though and seeing what types of photos were used with branded filters, live stories, etc.," he said.

### **Mobile and legality**

Legal and privacy panelists at Mobile Marketer's Mobile FirstLook: Strategy 2015 conference agreed that mobile is blurring the line between data protection and privacy, with concern growing about personal data that is not necessarily private and how it is collected or shared ([see more](#)).

Prior to the privacy update, Snapchat also hoped to make a significant uptick in marketing palatable to users with an opt-in approach with a slew of advertising tactics, but its biggest challenge has been helping marketers measure the return on their investments ([see more](#)).

"This SnapChat terms of service change is the copyright GroundHog Day of privacy flaps," said Jules Polonetsky executive director at Future of Privacy Forum. "Every time a company puts in standard copyright language needed to allow use of user generated content, users and critics read it and get upset.

"Then they realize it is in every terms of use on the internet, at every site that needs rights to display or transmit user created content," he said. "Users should be used to this by now, but companies should also be aware of the concern and do a better job of anticipating the confusion and communicating more clearly, instead of having to explain the day after."

### **Final Take**

*Brielle Jaekel is editorial assistant at Mobile Marketer*