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10-16-2014

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#### Recommended Citation

Saxton, Nicole, "Yik Yak App Surfacing on School Campus" (2014). GWU-Today. 56.

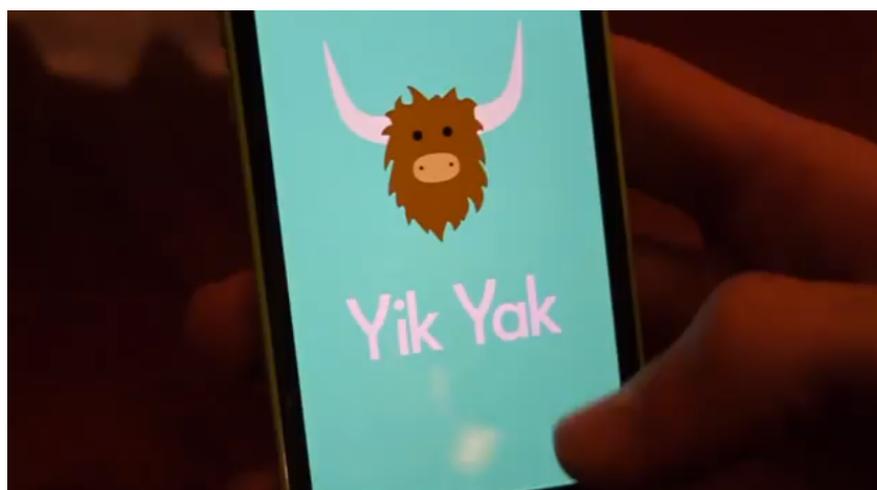
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## Yik Yak App Surfacing on School Campus

🕒 October 16, 2014 👤 GWU Today 📁 News 💬 1



By: Nicole Saxton

Anonymous social media app, Yik Yak, pose problems for schools. According to school officials and psychologists, the Yik Yak app is bad news; being used as a medium for bullying, school threats and damaging the mentally of students. Its circulation to Gardner-Webb brought a few problems.

Yik Yak is an anonymous messaging app, which allows users to write 200-character posts that can be read by people in the surrounding areas. The app doesn't have pictures, music, links,

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videos or emojis, unlike countless of other social media applications.

Acting as a virtual bulletin board, it allows users to leave comments and vote either “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” on the post. If a post is “down voted” enough times, the comment disappears.

In less than a week, GWU blocked the app from their Wi-Fi.

Jessica Heilig, a senior basketball player at GWU, thinks the majority of the posts on the Yik Yak app are petty and people would never be bold enough to say those things in person. Heilig said the app created unnecessary drama and it was good that the school blocked it, but, she wonders if they blocked this, then what else would they block?

“I didn’t take any of it personally,” says **Kallie Ingle**, a cheerleader for the Runnin’ Bulldogs. “It is definitely cyber bullying because some posts targeted specific girls.” Ingle feels the posts on the app are offensive and she believes mainly athletes feed into it.

With mixed view points on the issue, some students think the app is pure comedy. Some posts are lyrics, inspiration quotes and actual campus news. Some Yik Yak posts were “I’m so deep in the friend zone, I’ve met her boyfriend’s parents,” and “I’m convinced girls only want one thing from guys, all of their hoodies.”

When students heard the app might get banned, they posted, “Are they really going to take the only entertainment I have away?” Another student said, “GWU will never let you have any fun.”

Making it unavailable via Wi-Fi, forces students to access the app by using their data plans. This seems extreme to some, but, not to GWU President Dr. Frank Bonner.

Bonner said the app is nothing but trash and nothing worthwhile. He doesn’t see why the school should be a part of it. One concern he has is, what could be compelling students to say what they are saying.

The Yik Yak posts vary, but the majority on GWU’s campus have been reported as sexual, racial and discriminating content. There have been some Yik Yak posts exposing secrets from members of

different athletic teams, such as calling out males who are sleeping around and the females with STD's.

The posts are supposed to be purely anonymous, which means you cannot put a name in the post. But sometimes those posts slip under the radar. Not only have student's names appeared on the app, so have some of GWU's faculty.

Bonner said, "At some point you need to draw the line." He feels students are lucky the app is anonymous, because if the students' names behind the malicious post were visible, they would be embarrassed for choosing to post it.

In the President's eyes, the question here is, what does this say about the person behind these posts, their thoughts and what kind of issues are they having?

Bonner says, "It's just an unhealthy way to communicate and relate to one another." There will always be a medium to communicate, but this medium Gardner-Webb has chosen to break ties from.

Dr. Iva Naydenova, a professor of Psychology & Counseling at GWU, said "I'm amazed that an app like that even exists, because it appeals to the negative side of human nature." Stating how impressionable and vulnerable students are, she knows the app will do more harm than good. This is especially troublesome for those who are battling internal issues; someone sending a malicious Yik Yak post would send them on downward spiral.

Tyler Droll and Brooks Buffington, both graduates of Furman University, are the creators of the Yik Yak app. In a news article about the Yik Yak app, from *The Cavalier Daily*, Buffington says, "We saw a problem in that the social media voice [on campus] was held in the hands of a few people [...] and we wanted to give the voice back to the little guy; give everyone a voice."

There are other anonymous social media apps like Yik Yak, such as Streechat, Whisper, Secret and the anonymous question-and-answer Ask.fm. These other apps have been out for quite some time, but, Yik Yak is currently what is popular among teens and young adults.

Dr. Keith Ablow, a psychiatrist and member of the Fox News

Medical A-Team, views Yik Yak as the most dangerous app he has ever seen. He said, “I am willing to say all this about Yik Yak honestly and openly, without hiding behind an anonymous app created by antisocial developers who want to get rich and don’t care if that means ruining our kids on the way to the bank.”

Cyberbullying expert Justin W. *Patchin* says putting a geo-sense on the schools is just a short-term solution. As more applications pop up and the environments of social networking sites change, the emphasis should be on teaching younger generations about respect in online communities. “It is more important to talk to the students about how to treat each other respectfully. Whether it is happening in an application like this or Facebook or on e-mail, the emphasis for us has always been on those behaviors because it is easier to teach that than to restrict that to particular technology.”



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## 1 COMMENT

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**GWU STUDENT**

OCTOBER 17, 2014 AT 3:45 AM

I am very thankful that GWU blocked it. Certain individuals would often post negative things about women and how “unattractive” or “God forsaken” that they were. After having it for a few days, I became overly concerned that something might show up on there that was about me. Due to anxiety, I had to delete it. People on this campus took it too far and don’t realize that what they say could actually influence a student to hurt themselves or be depressed. It’s psychological torture. The app is nothing but repulsive.

Comments are closed.