

Snapchat for Journalists

Snapchat has had quite the evolution

2012



Disruptions: Indiscreet Photos, Glimpsed Then Gone

By NICK BILTON MAY 6, 2012, 5:24 PM 21 Comments



Snapchat allows people to take and send a picture, then control how long it is visible by the person who receives it.

2015

BUSINESS

Snapchat's "California Shooting" Story Showed Its Approach To Breaking News

Like others getting into the news business, Snapchat is taking cautious steps as it expands from light-hearted fun into coverage of national tragedies.

posted on Dec. 4, 2015, at 1:46 p.m.



Sapna Maheshwari
BuzzFeed News Reporter



How did we get here?

2011-2012

Snapchat launches and becomes popular (among tweens)

2014

Snapchat develops Our Story (public stream of Snaps)

2013

Snapchat adds Stories, filters, timestamps, replay, etc.

March 2015

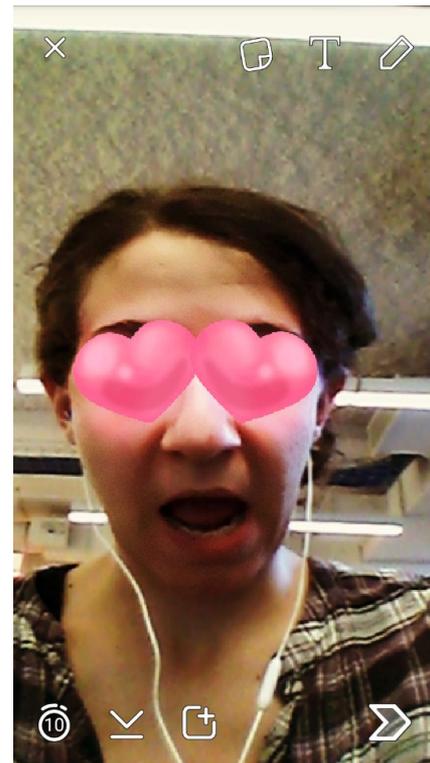
Snapchat launches discover (channels from Vice, NatGeo, CNN, Cosmopolitan, Vox, etc)



Discover stories



Typical use



UX challenges and frustrated tweets



Murat Bahar @mbahar · Dec 4

@fredwilson @Snapchat UX is like visiting a secret clan that never makes sense to strangers. May be intentional?



[View conversation](#)



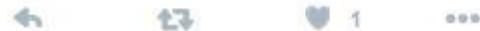
Sri @sriag · Nov 27

.@Snapchat UX is a litmus test for millennials



Amy Wang @ORAmyW · Sep 4

Still trying to wrap my **journalist** head around Snapchat. This @Poynter article was helpful: ow.ly/RO4K3 @ScottNelson



Snapchat has

-given networks a platform
(Discover)

-hired journalists

-aggregated user stories for news

**... but what about the citizen
journalist as a user of Snapchat?**

What do journalists on Snapchat need?

Instruction

Control

Tone

Text

Sequence

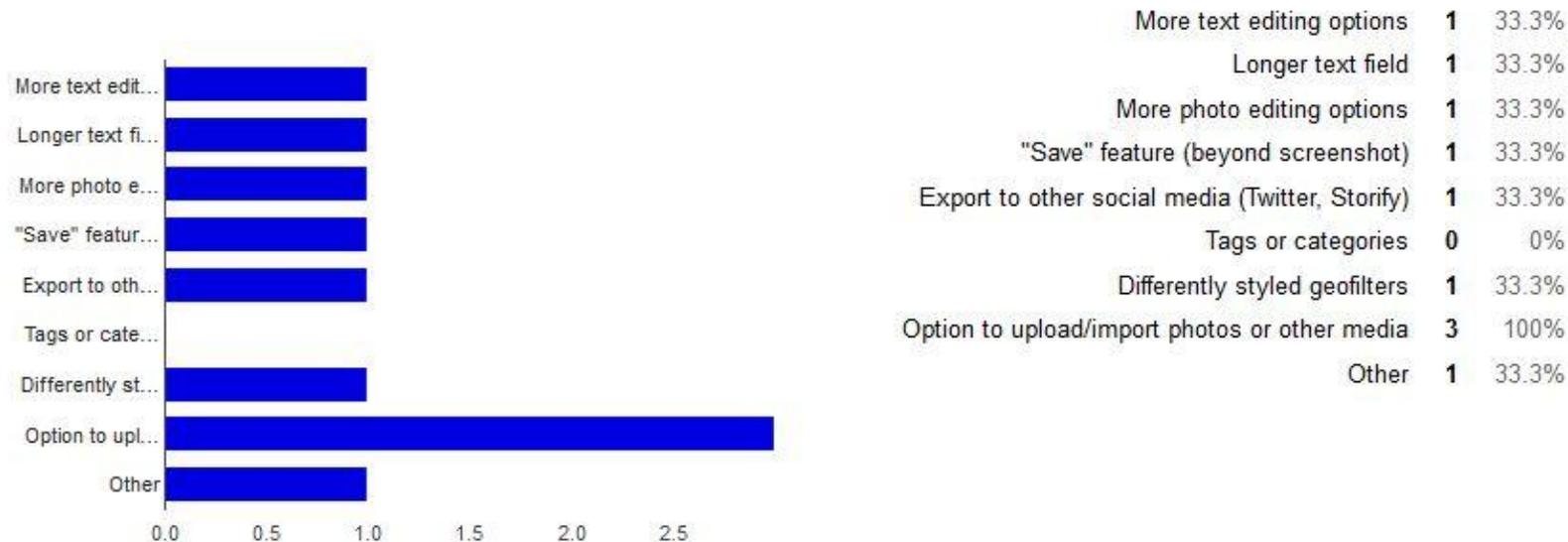
Sharing

“It was hard to understand that there was no **continuity** like in the other social networks.

When I started to send private messages, I was like “where the hell are my past messages?””

Survey of Snapchat users age 25-34*

Which of the following features would you like to see added?



*small sample size. Add to the research at <http://goo.gl/forms/NM7dP9haF1>



In response to the UX challenges I've observed, I propose a companion app that would work **with** Snapchat to add more text, context and tone variation. After filtering their Snaps through the Snapchat for Journalists app, the user could send them to an existing Story on Snapchat or export them to Storify.

Prototype features

Default time and location stamp

Background shapes with color

Paragraph text

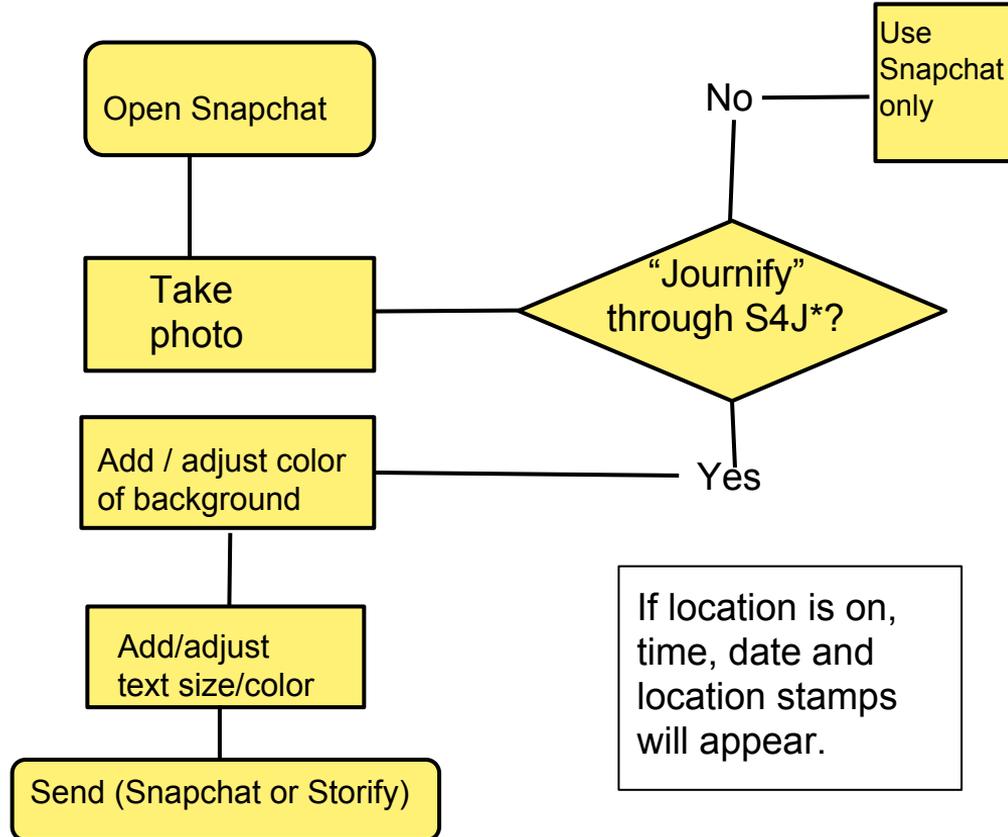
Export to Storify or your Snapchat story

See prototype: <https://invis.io/HK5B9AK95>

User journey 1: Media savvy reporter

Alex is a [DNAinfo](#) reporter covering a fire in her neighborhood. She has only a phone and very little time to file the story.

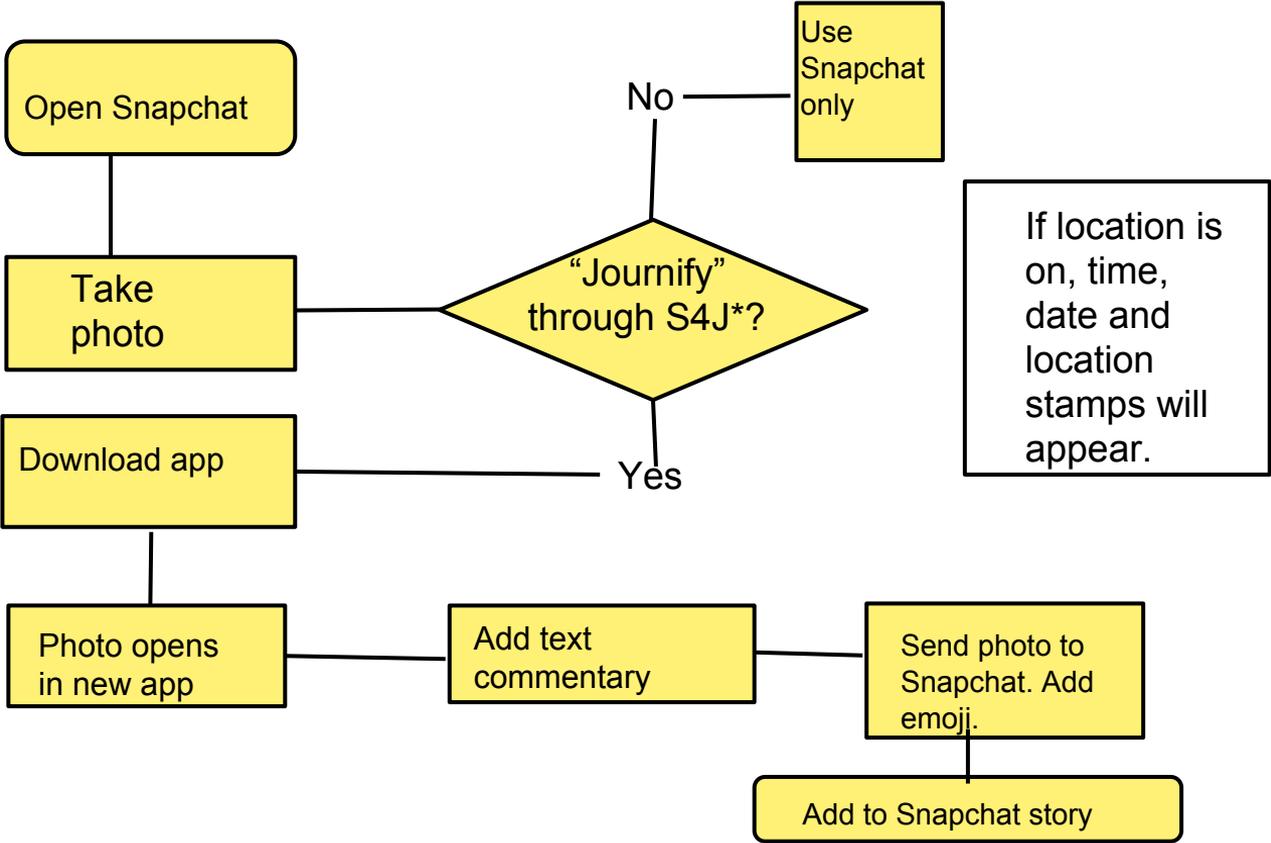
She already has the app and keeps up with mobile technology.



*S4J = Snapchat for journalists

User journey 2: Interested beginner

Rashaad uses Snapchat to message friends. He got the chance to attend the National League championships and wants to document the game.



Frequently Asked Questions

Why a separate app and not just a redesign of Snapchat's UI?

I thought long and hard about this. Proposing a change to Snapchat's UI may have achieved my goals, but I feared it would radically change the app, which has a quirky and fun aesthetic and has social messaging, not news, at its core. I drew inspiration from Instagram's [Layout](#), which adds collage capability in a separate app to keep the main one uncluttered.

Will this alienate loyal Snappers?

As mentioned above, the reason this is a separate app is to retain Snapchat's original user base. I think the answer depends on the big picture. Would Snapchat develop this app? If yes, branding would be consistent with the Snapchar interface. If not, the app would have more freedom to have a distinct visual identity.

What features could be added?

Text and background features are being considered first because the lack of ability to insert paragraph text - and add a visual barrier between the image and text - hobbles people who want to add context to their Snaps. Some use the hack of scribbling out a background with the Draw tool, but this is very labor intensive!

Other features I'd like to add are: a tool to make photos into animated GIFs, basic filters to enhance photo quality, and more video tools, generally.

Why so serious?

Since I wanted to give options for a more "serious" tone in Snaps, there's a perception that this app will take the fun out of Snapchat, but I'd hate to see that happen. I envision many people still adding emoji, whimsical geofilters and other elements that Snapchat has become famous for. They may only want to have one "serious" Snap at the beginning of a story to set context, and finish the story with classic Snaps.

Why it works (Fogg Behavior Model)



Motivation

This app is designed for a niche user who will be motivated to keep up with the newest trends in mobile journalism.

Ability

Snapchat is free and this companion app will be free, too.

There are minimal steps to image editing.

Triggers

A new icon will catch the user's eye. A message will pop up explaining what's possible and linking to a screen where the user can download it.