ST. CECILIA'S WYONG

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

2018

Safe on Social Guide to

Sarahah

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Your Guide to being Safe on Social Media

About Sarahah

Sarahah was launched in its app form in February 2017, by a Saudi programmer Zain al-Abidin Tawfiq.

The app was initially only available in Arabic, but after a strong uptake in several Middle eastern countries- culminating with 3 million users in Egypt alone, an English version was released in the Apple store in June 2017.

In a single day, the app was viewed 2 million times. In excess of 20 million users interact with the app daily, and there are 300 million account holders worldwide.

It has taken off amongst teenagers across the Western world, much like ASK . FM a few short years ago.

Once teenagers began linking the app to their Snapchat and Instagram profiles, the app rocketed up the sales rankings becoming the number one social media app in a number of days. This is a concern, particularly as the app has an age recommendation of 17+.

Free
Category: Social Networking
Updated: 20 December 2017
Version: 2.1.2
Size: 40.1 MB
Languages: English, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Turkish
Seller: Sarahah LLC
© 2017 Sarahah
You must be at least 17 years old to download this application.
Unrestricted Web Access
Infrequent/Mild Profanity or Crude Humour

What it is

The creator of Sarahah, designed the app with a corporate focus. He believed there was a communication problem between employees and their employers, and having a tool for employees to express their feedback frankly and anonymously could be helpful.

His central theory was that people are more inclined to express themselves truthfully when their words could be anonymous.
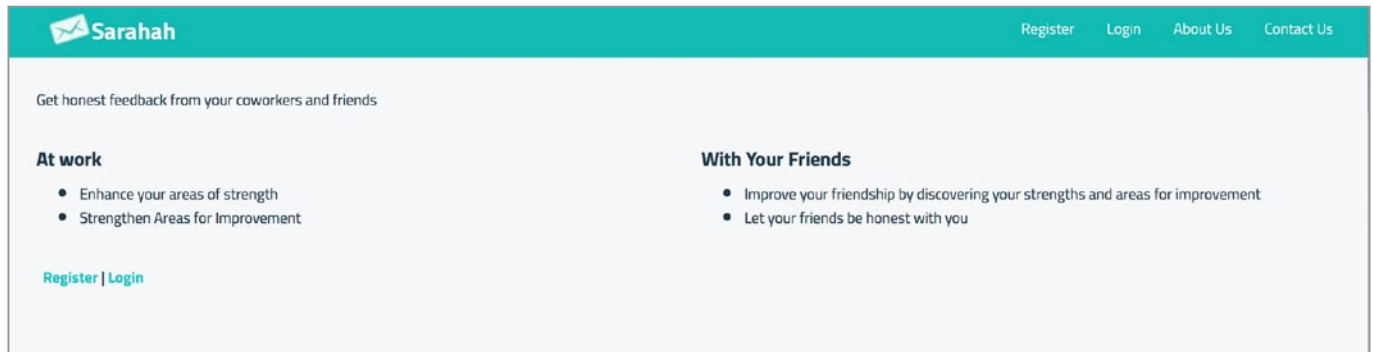
'It is an anonymous app , that promises absolute privacy for it's account holders. Once registered you may send messages to anyone with your identity kept secret.
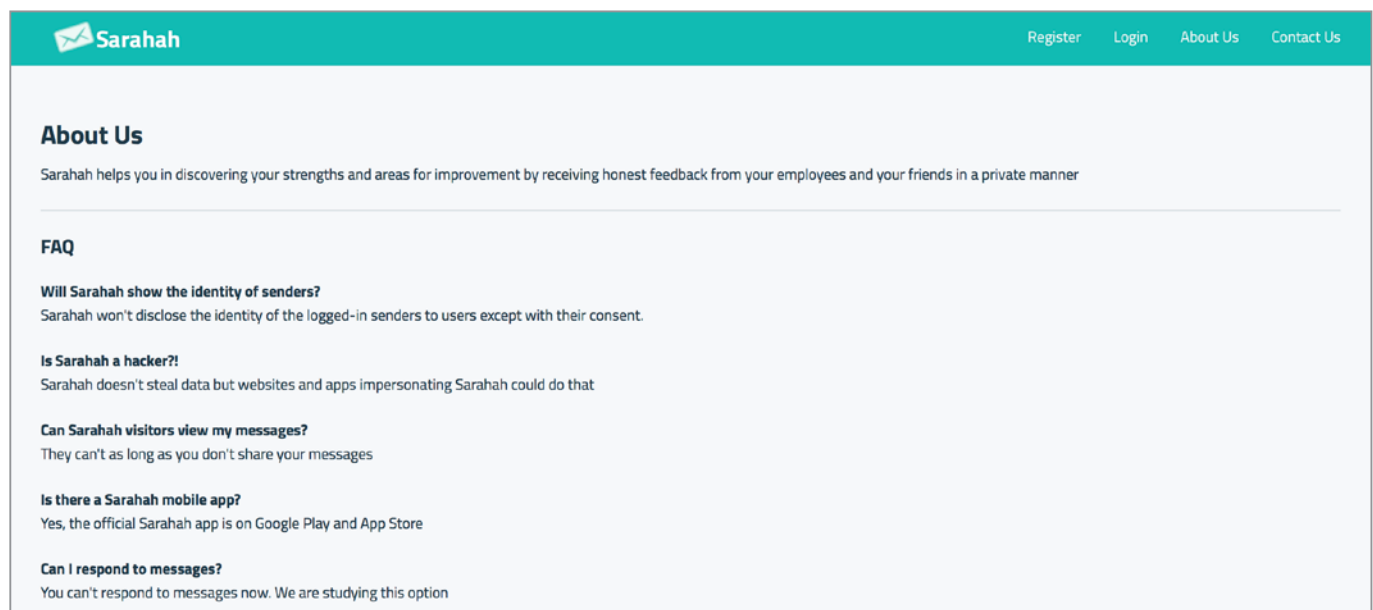
How it works

To register a person needs only provide a name, e0-mail address and a profile image – no phone numbers etc. are required.

There is an opt out function to remove a profile picture or name from showing on the app. This is recommended as it hinders other users searching out an individual easily.

No opting out, and registration details appear automatically (name and photo).
There is also an opt out function in the comments - this allows a user to eliminate comments being received from random internet strangers. (Links can then only be shared with specific

individuals, though there is nothing stopping that link being shared onwards.) Choosing to share comments allows access to any commenters.

Once joined your profile like can be published on other social media platforms and you can ask for feedback about yourself. Absolutely anything maybe posted, and it is. Cyberbullying is rife.
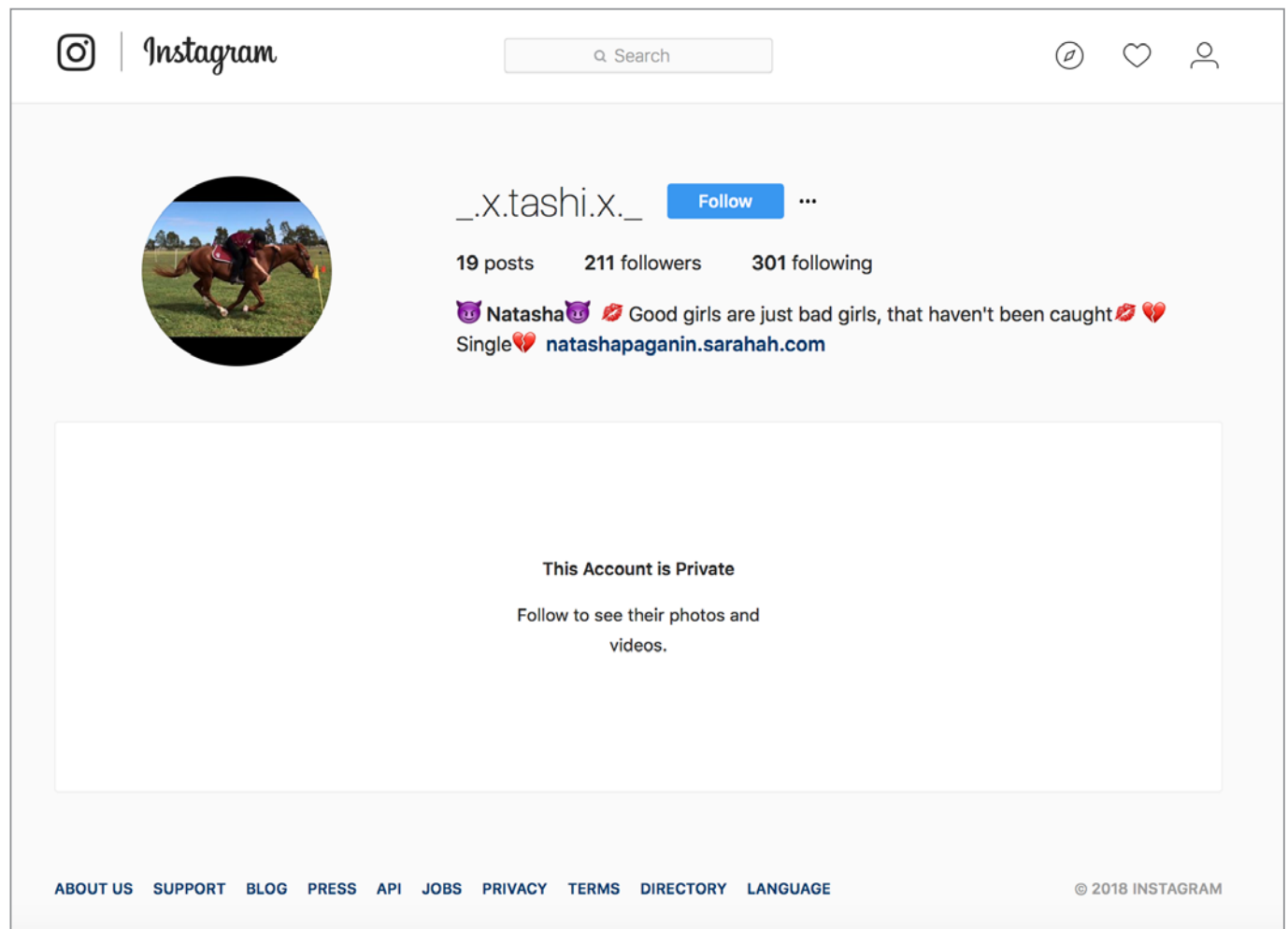
Risks

Cyberbullying

While there have been versions of the anonymous app floating around the internet for a while (ask.fm, secret, whisper etc),these have not had the global level of success that Sarahah is seeing.

The creator states he started this app to break down barriers, but it must be asked if these anonymous apps encourage cyberbullying - which has been evidenced from the previous iterations.

When there is the likelihood of no repercussions, and anything can be said from the safety of a screen - people will be mean. And are. This app is unnecessary, and merely opens another avenue for people to take their more unpleasant tendencies out for a walk. If your child is desperate to have it - firstly, respect the age recommendation of 17+ but also ask them why? As given the level of unpleasantness on it, there is no real need.

Users are reporting personal comments being made on appearances, abilities, personality and have experienced being insulted on a daily basis. An adult may have the ability to make a sensible choice, and delete this app, but for a teen user who is being pressured by their peers?

Many lack the maturity to deal with daily insults and lack the determination to delete the app, and then agonize of the comments received.

Tragically in Australia, there has been a suicide specifically linked by family members to the app.

https://www.warwickdailynews.com.au/news/for-dolly-queensland-mum-calls-for-ban-of-honesty-/3308157/

Moderation

This app is still being developed and has a very small staff.

There is no real policy laid out for the process taken with reported comments or users who repeated breach terms and conditions.

The terms and conditions themselves are sparse, with vague language.

All users must comply with the terms and conditions on this page

Public Use

All users should commit to ethics and values and should refrain from insult and abuse of the site.

Privacy Policy

All users have to read the privacy policy linked to in the footer and their use of the website implicates agreement to the policy.

Denial of Access

Sarahah has the right to block any user from accessing the website or using it's services in general.

Impersonation

Impersonation by name or subdomain is not allowed and Sarahah has the right to take adequate actions.

Inactive Accounts

Sarahah has the right to remove inactive accounts under the duration that Sarahah sees adequate.

Removal of Messages and Accounts

Sarahah has the right to remove any message or account with the justification that the website management sees adequate.

Information

Sarahah has the right to use the information input by users with agreement to the privacy policy

E-mail

Sarahah has the right to e-mail users with what Sarahah sees adequate with the option to unsubscribe from notification e-mails

Modifications of Terms and Conditions

We have the right to modify terms and conditions if needed and whenever adequate

Limits of Responsibility

All communicated content on the website is the responsibility of their owners and Sarahah is not responsible for its content or any damage that could result from this content or the use of any of the site's

Hacking

Given the ability of hackers today to delve into databases at will (think Ashley Madison), the absolute secrecy of the posters – advertised by the developers is almost a challenge. Such a guarantee is essentially impossible, and the ultimate reveal of identity that will doubtlessly come of all the messengers posting horrible things will prove devastating to many.

*Searching individuals not on your contacts list.*

You are able to comment on accounts of users not in your contacts list.

Comments can come from both friends and those with no recognisable association to you.

Some Solutions

Delete it.

This must be done through the website version of the application, using the settings options. There is no method to do this via the app itself.
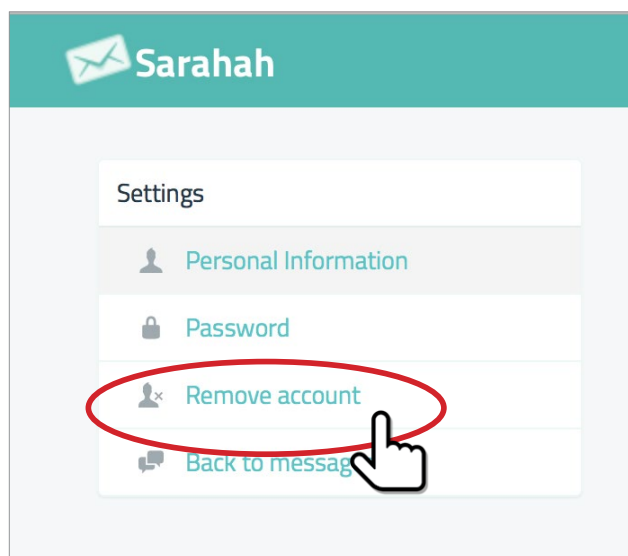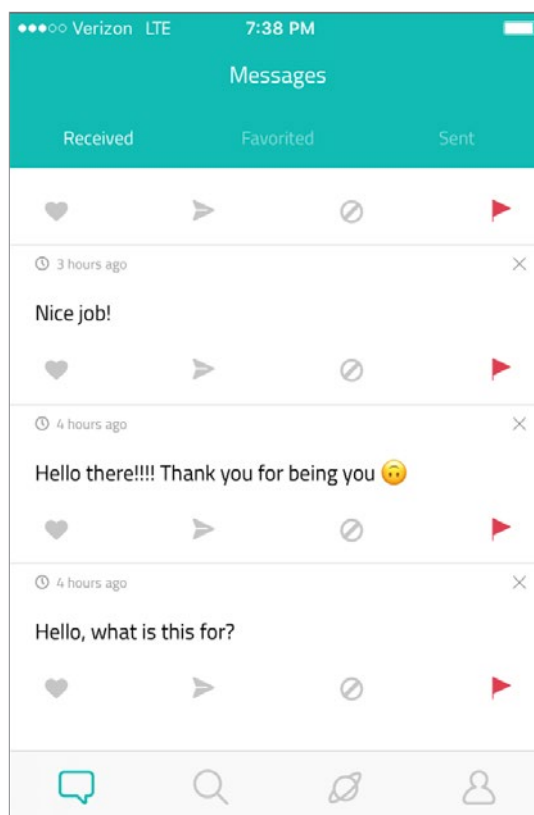

Choose the settings option above. The following window will appear allowing you to remove your account.. There is no method to do this via the app itself.
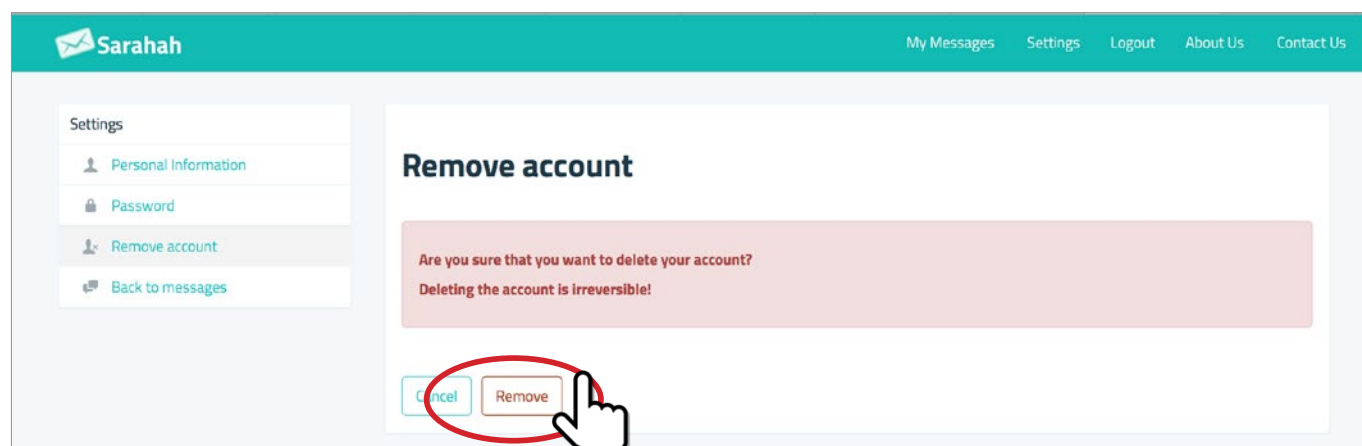
Report and block

This is possible, but there are no indications provided about what action will be taken for accounts reported or users who have been blocked.

Below each message are four particular icons:

Report - red flag   •   Block- icon   •   Reply   •   Heart - for favourite comments

Should you "reply" to a message- you are actually sharing the comment to your other linked social media accounts.

There is no way of determining who is sending hateful messages, and if necessary, of reporting them to police. The app in its terms and conditions, will not release the identity of a poster unless it is with the specific users consent.

Summary

The likelihood of this app being banned is not high. The likelihood of Apple store and google, refusing to sell or list these anonymous apps is also low.

Teenagers like things they are told not to use.

But... Sarahah is maybe, just maybe starting to annoy them – which is often a good thing. The constant number of people posting all their Sarahah comments on Snapchat and Instagram for all to see is cluttering up the feeds of friends, and these friends are actively complaining.

Sarahah's own popularity may bury it yet which would be a good thing.

We also need to remember that apps don't bully, people do. Apps are just the platform for this horrendous behaviour to breed.

Safe on Social

www.safeonsocialmedia.com.au