

## A Parent's Guide to Sarahah app

February 2018

Information extracted from NetAware (<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/sarahah-news/>):

Sarahah (meaning 'honesty' or 'candour' in Arabic) is a website and free app [released in June 2017] for Android and iPhone, where you can send completely anonymous comments and feedback to other users. It is becoming increasingly popular and is currently the top free app on the App Store and is listed on Google Play as having over 500,000 downloads.

*(as of July 2017)*

The app can be used on its own as well as alongside other social networks.

- On Snapchat, you can send an image with a link to your Sarahah account attached so people can leave you anonymous feedback on the Snap. You can also send an image of the messages you've received on Sarahah out on Snapchat
- On Instagram, users can add their Sarahah account to their Instagram bio. People can then access your Sarahah account by visiting your Instagram profile and send you anonymous feedback
- On Facebook, users can post the link to their Sarahah account on their status

On Sarahah, you can read and 'favourite' messages you receive BUT you cannot reply to them or find out who they are from. Messages on Sarahah are completely anonymous. The only people who can send you feedback are people you've shared your Sarahah username with.

### Can this lead to online bullying?

It has been stated (through various national newspapers) that the app can facilitate and encourage online bullying with critics on social media saying the anonymity of Sarahah affords users the forum to bully people, with the potential to lead to abuse.

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### **How Sarahah works**

Sarahah is an anonymous feedback app, originally designed for use in the corporate world to allow employees to give anonymous criticism to their employers. Now, predominantly used by teens to pass anonymous digital notes to each other.

The app allows you to create a profile and works as an add-on to other popular networking apps (see p.1). It draws on the users contact list to connect with friends and send anonymous comments to them. You can also search for users and send them anonymous notes also... even if you don't know them!

Sarahah's screens are quite bare/simple, they aren't the colourful app screens we're all used to. The app works by attaching itself like a digital parasite to Snapchat (and other apps), enabling users to use screenshots of negative comments to receive consolation from friends (*friends who might be the anonymous authors of those negative comments!*) or to brag about how cool they are.

More often than not, Sarahah is used to say all the mean things that a user would never say to a friend's face. The App store reviews confirm this, as users recount stories of anonymous death threats and sexual harassment. Review on 'Common Sense Media' (<https://www.common sense media.org/app-reviews/sarahah#>) advises, like so many other anonymous apps before it, this is another one to avoid.

### **Useful to know**

A tool has been added to allow users to block messages from senders who may have sent offensive messages. When a contact is blocked, the app will not reveal who sent the message but it will make sure they are not able to send any further messages.

The app is rated 'Teen' on the App Store but also states users must be over 17 years of age.

The app does have privacy settings, however, if you download the app and consent the app will collect your full contact list for use.

Within privacy settings you can choose not to be found in a search or to get feedback from unregistered users.

### **Links to other articles:**

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/tech/sarahah-honesty-app-cyber-bullying-11051162>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2017/08/10/sarahah-everyone-talking-honesty-first-secret-messaging-app/>

<https://protectyoungeyes.com/content/sarahah-app/>