

DATA

The Ghost Is Coming for You

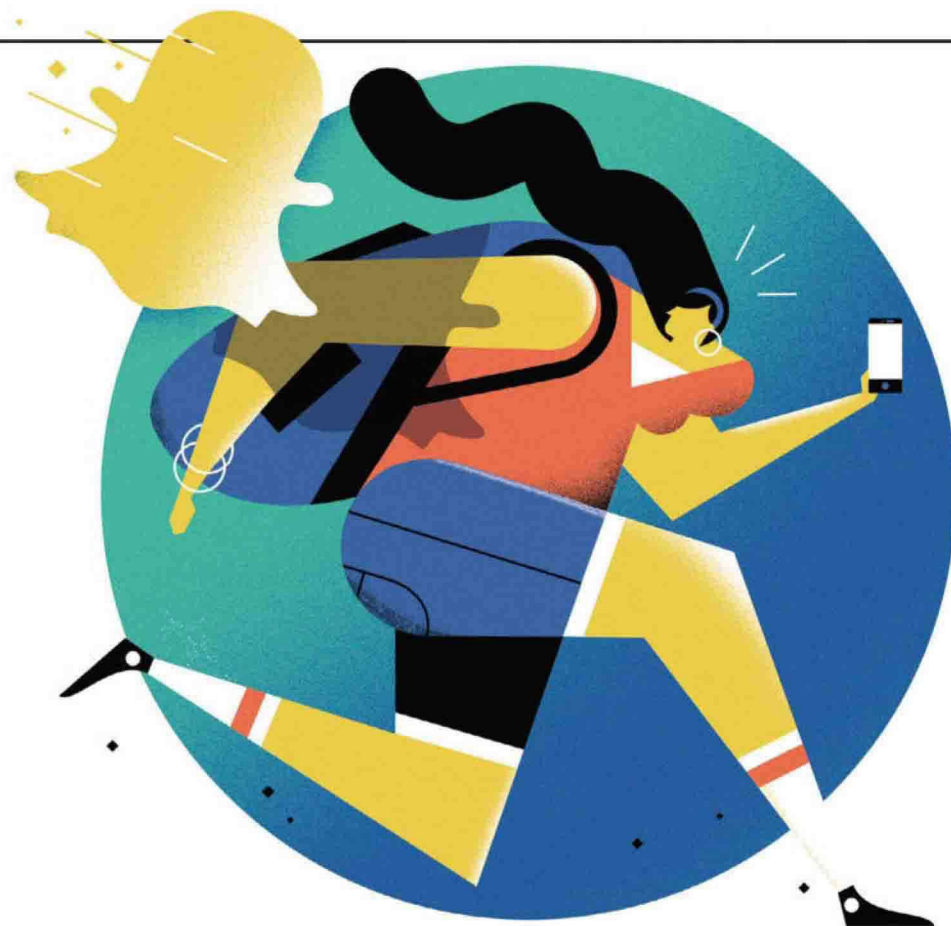
MARKETERS WILL GET THE SNAPCHAT TARGETING DATA THEY WANT. BUT WILL IT SCARE OFF DEVOTED USERS?
BY ROSS BENES

Having wowed advertisers at the Cannes Lions in June with the unveiling of its long-awaited ad tech platform, Snapchat has shown no signs of slowing down.

The popular messaging app plans to attract deep-pocketed marketers and investors with the introduction of in-app behavioral targeting in the fourth quarter timed to a rumored IPO. To improve ad targeting, the popular messaging app last week announced Snap Audience Match, which lets brands take their email lists and files of mobile device IDs, and then anonymously sync the data with Snapchat's user pool. The company also will let a brand target viewers based on what content categories they follow.

A Fortune 500 marketer, who requested anonymity, said talks are underway with Snapchat to launch pilot programs around the ad-targeting initiative. And that's music to ad buyers' ears. "We expect this targeting to result in improved performance, and with time, increased investment," said Monika Ratner, director of social strategy and invention at media agency Horizon. "[Targeting is] important especially for social buying because we're inviting users to check out the content, not forcing or incentivizing them."

Brand marketers agree. "If there is a teen, and they are spending time on a fashion channel within Snapchat, that would be a great person for [our Hollister brand] to target," noted Michael Scheiner, vp of marketing and communications at Abercrombie & Fitch. Nick Dunham, director of media and partnerships at Dunkin' Donuts, added, "Any additional [data] layer, depending on what the goal of our objectives are, is helpful."



Behavioral data also will be effective for targeting interstitial ads. Justin Johnson, executive director of business development at Moment Studio, sees it being used between friends' stories for clients such as Nestlé. "Say we have a group of people who are watching recipe videos on Tastemade's Discover channel," Johnson explained. "Based on that data, I could target people who I know are into meal hacks. And we can serve them an ad showing new ways of using [Nestlé-owned] Lean Cuisine freezer meals to create unique recipes."

Consultant Neal Schaffer noted that behavioral data will give advertisers another way to "leverage the unique functionalities of Snapchat" such as geofilters and spon-

sored lenses. Fernanda Suarez, social media marketing manager at digital agency Huge, predicted that an individual who uses lenses sponsored by a particular brand could be retargeted by that same brand later on with an ad in his feed. A handful of other agencies also speculated that Snapchat will expand its targeting system and eventually gather behavioral data outside its app. Snapchat declined comment.

While ramping up targeting capabilities may be appealing to advertisers, Snapchat can't afford to alienate its users. Many have taken Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel's famous statement that targeted ads are "creepy" as an unbreakable credo.

Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter received pushback over privacy concerns when they expanded their targeting systems. "There's always going to be a vocal audience that is concerned with online privacy and tracking," commented John Liu, director of search and analytics at Blitz.

Industry analyst Rebecca Lieb said user discontent would not stop Snapchat from rolling out ad products. Especially since social media users, she said, have proved to be fickle. "There is a difference between what people say and what people do," Lieb remarked. "So all of this, I hate them, I'm never going to use the platform again—you know, once you're hooked, you are pretty well hooked."

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