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# TRENDING

## New anonymous app gets students on campus yakking

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It's the scribbles on the bathroom stall of social media.

Difference is, you're using your phone instead of the pen in your back pocket.

College students across the United States are using a new application, Yik Yak, which recently became a huge hit at UNC Asheville.

Its anonymity can be enticing, but **Sam Groesbeck, senior management student**, says sometimes, the effects aren't rewarding.

"The anonymity is also bad because people just kind of feel that it's a no-consequences thing and say whatever they want," Groesbeck says. "They're not really thinking about how it affects other people."

Yik Yak is a free app created by two Kappa Alpha fraternity brothers from Furman University. It was initially made for Greek organizations on college campuses, so people could post anonymous messages read by others within a 1.5 mile radius, according to Business Insider.

The app can be used to post or scroll through messages, but for **Zack Martin, mechatronics student**, and **Eric Edelstein, a psychology student**, the application provides a means of fun competition.

"I just got to the point where I wanted to be at the top of the board," Martin says.

Martin says he posted at most 76 times in one day, trying to make it to the top of the board.

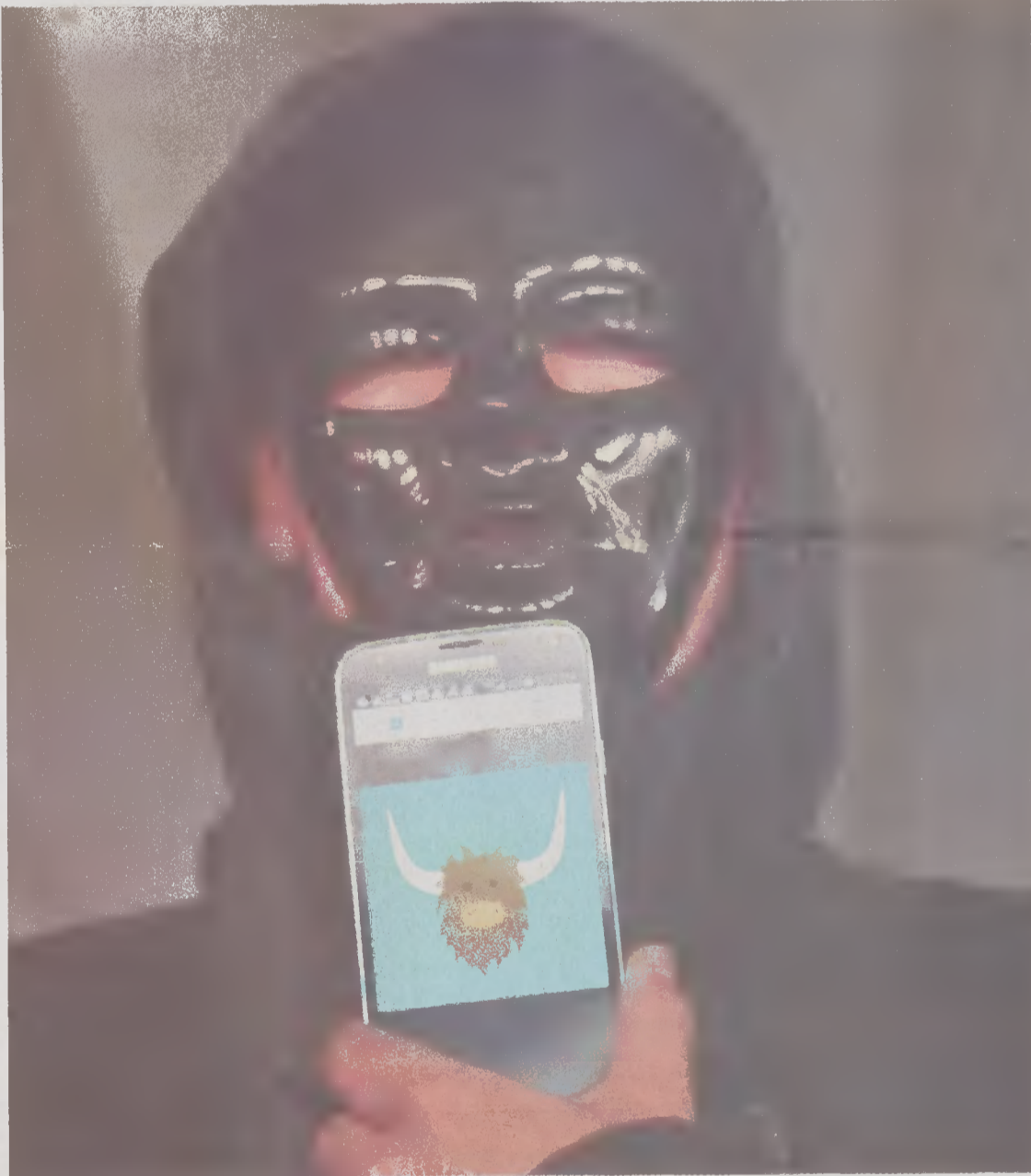


Photo Illustration by Brian Vu - Photography Editor

A new social app, Yik Yak, allows users to post anonymously to a hyper-localized forum.

And he succeeded. "The weird thing is that of those 76, about 20 of them were at the top of the board," Martin says. "The first 20 were all mine."

"Whoa, whoa, whoa - I was in there that day too,"

Edelstein says, interrupting Martin. "I had like three or four posts."

Other students, like **Keenan Devaney, sophomore Spanish student**, rarely use the application for posting. Devaney says

he spends most of his time on Yik Yak reading posts.

"Unless I come up with something really clever, I'm just going to continue reading and staying on that side of things."

But what makes this ap-

plication so controversial?

Yik Yak can be used as a cloak for people to express their opinions without fear of retribution. But anonymity is a double-edged sword.

The application can be

used to bully different people, according to Adweek.

"People can take shots at other people, and then have no backlash because no one knows who it is," Devaney says. "So they can really take advantage of the whole anonymous posting without as many consequences."

Yik Yak does have a self-regulating policy.

If students see a post that is negative or inappropriate, they can downvote it.

"We're in Asheville and Asheville seems to be pretty accepting," Martin says. "Whenever there is any sort of lash out that I've seen, it instantly gets five downvotes, or people comment."

As for UNCA, the Yik Yak posts are more positive than negative and people on campus enjoy the application because of this, Martin says.

Devaney, Edelstein and Martin all have one thing in common: the belief that Yik Yak's existence at UNCA is funny, uplifting, and for the most part, positive.

But that belief can differ elsewhere.

According to an AP Regional State Report from Mississippi, a student at the University of Southern Mississippi was arrested and charged for posting a threat to cause injury on Yik Yak.

Luckily, Asheville tells a different story.

"The most negative posts I've seen have actually been about depression and feeling lonely," Devaney says. "Which if I went to read the comments, all of the comments were positive afterwards."

## Local authorities crack down on property crimes

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Asheville residents have numerous tools, such as locking doors and reporting suspicious behavior, at their disposal to harden themselves against property crimes, according to the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office.

"I felt relieved that nothing was taken. I knew the area itself wasn't the greatest," said **Sebastian**

**Gurrola, a 22-year-old junior at UNC Asheville**, as he recalls his mom's experience with a property crime. "My mom was upset for obviously financial reasons, but also because someone broke into the car."

In 2013, there were 1,300 cases assigned to the property crimes division, which was a 27.6 percent increase from 2012, according to the sheriff's office.

Authorities cleared 599 cases, resulting in a 46.08

percent clearance rate. "Typically most of the crimes that we deal with are property crimes, breaking and entering and things of that nature," said **Natalie Bailey, the public information officer at Buncombe County Sheriff's Office**.

She said most of the time people commit these crimes looking for valuable items to trade for drugs or to get money for drugs.

"Most of what we've

found is that at the heart of all those crimes is some kind of dependence on some type of controlled substance," Bailey said.

She said thieves commonly check door handles for unlocked vehicles. If they come across an unlocked door, they easily gain access to the vehicle's contents.

**Detective Sarah Hofecker**, former employee at the property crimes division of the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office,

said locking your doors hardens residents against theft. Some people say they have the right to not lock their doors, but others may gain entry to their car and valuables as a result.

"All it takes is five minutes," Hofecker said.

Hofecker said some people use a lost dog as an excuse to check out potential targets.

They will knock on the door and if nobody answers or they don't hear a dog barking, they'll see the

residence as an easy target.

She said if someone answers the door, they would just say they're looking for their lost dog.

"They work in teams of two, sometimes utilizing a female because people are more inclined to hold a conversation with a female than a male," Bailey said.

Bailey said residents should call 911 if they see anyone suspicious. An officer will come out and

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