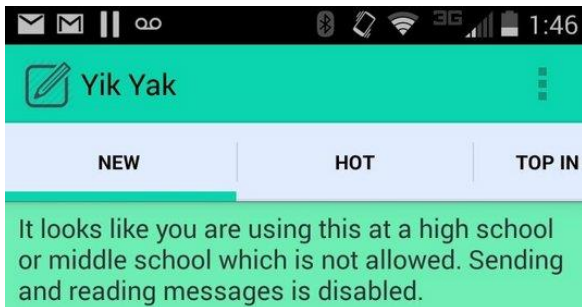
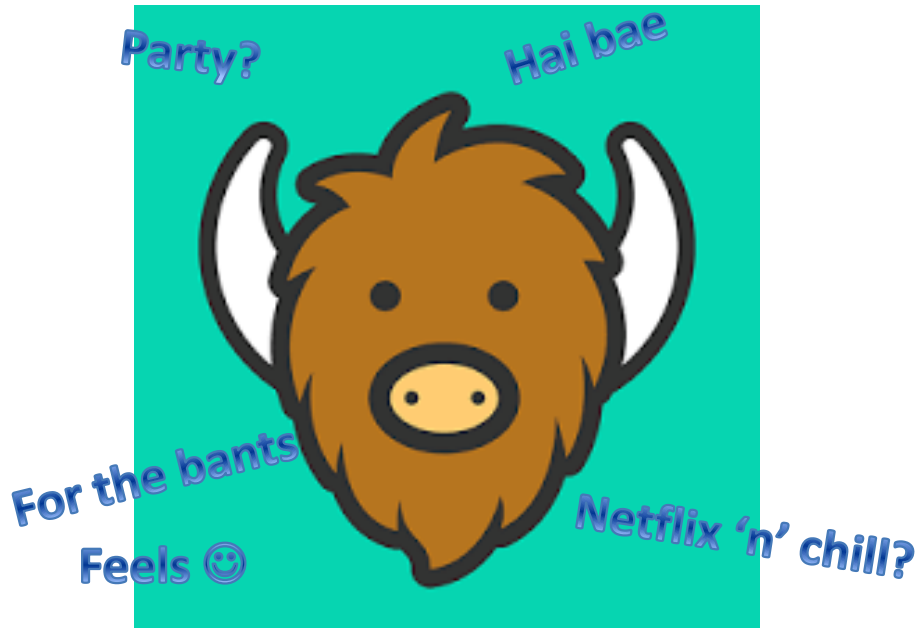


Yikking the Yak

how anonymous social media posts may assist with the
identification of student support needs

Yik Yak?



<http://www.businessinsider.com/what-is-yik-yak-2014-5?IR=T>

- Launched November 2013
- Social medium which allows anonymous posting
- User names may be hidden
- Location based
- Aimed at university students

<https://www.yikyak.com/home>

Allows feedback

- Yakarama
- Upvote/downvote
- Peek
- New/Hot
- My Herd
- Filters offensive material/images



<http://www.loser2winner.com/yik-yak/>



<http://heyevent.com/event/ufsly4f4gfstka/yikyak-stash-giveaway>

What and where

- A selected university ('herd' can be set to anywhere in the world)
- A twelve month period, collated by weeks
- Screen shots of current yaks at random times of day and night once in 24 hours
- Correlated with information from student support services at chosen university

Ethical considerations

- Berry (2004) argues that the internet is in a state of constant flux and as such ethical considerations will struggle to keep up with the changes. He argues that there is need for a certain flexibility in the so called 'golden rule' concerning human subjects that one should 'do no harm'.
- The British Sociological Association (2002) talk about consent 'as far as possible'
- Actors are not being manipulated in that they are freely publishing their comments. The researcher is be observing rather than questioning.
- Caveat: where harm may come to an individual it is stipulated that the researcher **MUST** intervene with an advisory yak

Break it down

- Shock – A yak intended to provoke a reaction
- Joke – sometimes dubious, often recycled
- Emote – “I feel....”
- Question – usually serious, replies vary!

Northcut (2015)



Initial Review

No real surprises in:-

- Sex (much and varied)
- Drugs (predominantly alcohol)
- Rock 'n' roll (parties/nights on the town)

Also high on the list:-

- Lectures – bored/hungover/high in
- Assignments/workload – too much/too late
- Staff – loved/loathed

Initial Review

- Students are (usually) helpful to each other
- Bullying is happening but infrequently and usually 'policed' by other students
- A significant number of students :-
 - hate late night noise
 - feel lonely
 - are waiting for 'the one'

Initial review

- 'Blue Monday', 3rd Monday in January – increased suicide threats
- Exam periods – increased anxiety but not as high as may be expected
- Bullying – individuals targeted/identified
- Holiday periods – drop in number of yaks, comments about boredom

Incidents and Accidents

- In a four month period staff recorded various incidents:-
 - Antisocial Behaviour
 - Support needed
 - Violations of fire safety
 - Violence/aggression
- Incidents involving ASB double the next on the list

What do the Yaks say about this?

- Students hate noisy neighbours
- Certain staff identified as being the 'one to go to' for support
- Drunk cooking/in room smoking causes 'fire' incidents
- Violence seldom mentioned, raises questions as to whether it has become 'normalised'

Is it useful?

- Support staff (particularly those on night patrol) can find the noisy parties more easily
- Staff monitoring the app can inform decisions about the availability of advice and what is foregrounded
- The ability to respond with accurate and factual information without alerting students to the fact that it is a staff member (more likely to be taken on board)

Other universities....?

- Lets take a 'peek'

References

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- VAN DEVENTER J. P. (2009) Ethical considerations during human centred overt and covert research *Qual Quant* (2009) 43:45–57 DOI 10.1007/s11135-006-9069-8

