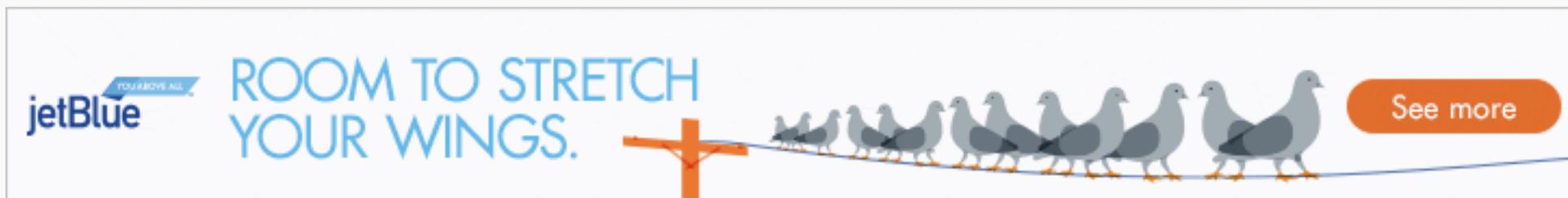




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# Snapchat Settles FTC Complaint That It Lied to Users About Messages Disappearing Forever

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**By Matt Rocheleau**

Boston.com Staff

MAY 8, 2014 1:57 PM



napchat has agreed to settle federal charges that it deceived users

☺ when it promised that messages, photos and other data transmitted via the popular smartphone messaging app would disappear permanently, the Federal Trade Commission announced today.

“Touting the ephemeral nature of snaps, the term used to describe photo and video messages sent via the app, Snapchat marketed the app’s central feature as the user’s ability to send snaps that would “disappear forever” after the sender-designated time period expired,” the commission said in a statement.

However, officials said, recipients of snaps can save the messages in “several simple ways.”

RELATED [Snapchat is Not as Private as it Used to Be](#) | [Jan. 1: Snapchat Suffers Security Breach](#) |  Share This Story



“Consumers can, for example, use third-party apps to log into the Snapchat service ... to view and save snaps indefinitely,” the FTC statement said.

“Indeed, such third-party apps have been downloaded millions of times,” the statement said. “Despite a security researcher warning the company about this possibility ... Snapchat continued to misrepresent that the sender controls how long a recipient can view a snap.”

The federal complaint also alleged that Snapchat failed to secure its ‘Find Friends’ feature which led to [a recent security breach](#) in which attackers compiled a database of 4.6 million Snapchat usernames and phone numbers.

“If a company markets privacy and security as key selling points in pitching its service to consumers, it is critical that it keep those promises,” FTC Chairwoman Edith Ramirez said in statement.

“Any company that makes misrepresentations to consumers about its privacy and security practices risks FTC action,” she added.

The settlement requires Snapchat to start a “comprehensive privacy program,” which will be monitored by an independent privacy professional for the next 20 years, federal officials said.

The deal also prohibits Snapchat from misrepresenting the privacy, security and confidentiality of users’ information, officials said.

The commission’s complaint also alleged that the app stored video snaps in a way that left them vulnerable to being accessed by recipients if they connected their device to a computer to search through its file directory.

Snapchat was also accused of deceiving users when it told them they would be notified if a recipient took a screenshot of their snap.

“In fact, any recipient with an Apple device that has an operating system pre-dating iOS 7 can use a simple method to evade the app’s screenshot detection, and the app will not notify the sender,” the FTC said.

The commission also charged that Snapchat transmitted geolocation data from users on Android devices, a contradiction to its privacy policy which said the company neither tracked nor accessed such information.

And, the commission said that Snapchat collected iOS users’ entire contact lists and address books without notice or consent and that it did not do enough to verify that users who signed up were in fact who they claimed to be — a shortfall that led some users to unknowingly send snaps to complete strangers.

The commission said the case is part of an international crackdown on mobile app privacy by members of the Global Privacy Enforcement Network, which it described as “a cross-border coalition of privacy enforcement authorities.”

“The settlement with Snapchat is part of the FTC’s ongoing effort to ensure that companies market their apps truthfully and keep their privacy promises

to consumers," the commission's statement said.

Meanwhile, Snapchat rolled out new features for its app last week that have **drawn some criticism** because some of the additions do not automatically disappear.

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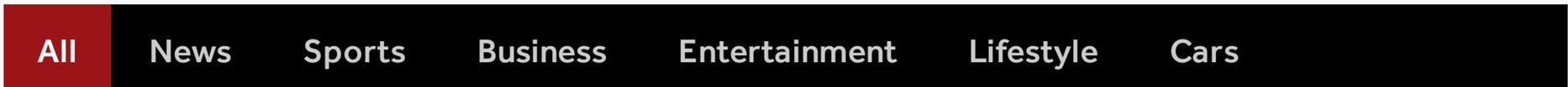
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## Panel finalizes recommendations to ease drug abuse

BOSTON (AP) — A state panel charged with finding ways to address Massachusetts' drug abuse epidemic is set to finalize its recommendations for Gov. Deval Patrick this week.

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## Outbursts

Attorney General Eric Holder says subtle, institutionalized racism has a more “pernicious” effect than the occasional bigoted outburst.

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Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.’s side gig as a consultant to New York University has apparently won him some enviable New York City housing benefits.

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## Three Injured in Fitchburg Shooting

Three people were shot at KC’s Pub on River Street in Fitchburg after midnight Saturday, NECN reports.

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## Boston Celtics Owners Invest in Skateboard League

There might not be many obvious similarities between high-tech electric car racing and some dude in a hoodie riding a skateboard.

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## BDC Now - Weekend Event Picks

Looking for something to do this weekend? Check out some events that include plenty of wine, a chance to meet some Red Sox players, a burger bash, and more. Watch BDC Weekend with Jenny Johnson.

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## US Ordered Not to Force Feed Guantanamo Prisoner

A federal judge in Washington ordered the U.S. military on Friday to at least temporarily stop force-feeding a hunger striking prisoner at the Guantanamo Bay naval base.

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## Genetically Modified Foods Confuse Consumers

Genetically modified foods have been around for years, but most people in the United States have no idea if they are eating them.

Food and dining  3 hours ago  Share

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## Vt. Sex Offender Faces Sentencing in Niece's Killing

A convicted sex offender who killed his 12-year-old niece after luring her to his house with a ruse about a pool party is due to be formally sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

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## Hike with Caution at White Mountains

Campgrounds in New Hampshire's White Mountain National Forest are open, but the Forest Service is warning people that some areas still have snow, and spring melt-off can lead to some slippery footing.

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## Will Connecticut Schools Ban Chocolate Milk?

Connecticut lawmakers moved forward this week on a new nutrition bill that could remove chocolate milk from public schools.

Health  3 hours ago  Share



## Lacrosse Team Honors Fallen Officer and Coach

The girls lacrosse team at Exeter High School is honoring their late coach Stephen Arkell, a New Hampshire police officer who was killed in the line of duty.

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## Celebrating 10 Years of Gay Marriage

On May 17, 2004, Massachusetts offered the first marriage licenses to same-



sex couples. We asked five couples to talk about what they've learned about themselves and their relationships over the past decade.

Life  4 hours ago  Share



## 10 Parting Shots at SNL Heading Into The Season Finale

Here are "10 Parting Shots at SNL" as the show's 39th season comes to a close Saturday night with Andy Samberg as host.

Obnoxious Boston Fan  4 hours ago  Share

## Environmentalists in Portland Oppose Tar Sands Oil

Environmentalists will rally at the Deering Oaks Park bandshell in Portland to oppose the Keystone XL oil pipeline and the shipping of tar sands oil through Maine.

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## Broke Beats: F.Stokes – ‘Liquor Sto’ Diaries’

Broke Beats is BDCwire’s open-source hip-hop column. Every Saturday, we showcase the best new albums, EPs, and mixtapes available for free stream or download. The Midwest has long been a stronghold for spirited rappers and producers who haven’t quite pierced the East Coast market. F.Stokes is among the most fearless of of these artists, and the... [Read more »](#)

BDCWire  4 hours ago  Share



## Oprah’s Network Postpones Sam Documentary

The planned documentary by the Oprah Winfrey Network on Michael Sam, the NFL's first openly gay player, has been postponed.

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## Woman Falls Down Elevator Shaft at Fenway Park

A 22-year-old woman is hospitalized after falling down an elevator shaft at Fenway Park Friday during a Red Sox game, according to the Boston Fire Department.

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## Obama, Congress Move to Address Veterans Affairs Firestorm

The Obama administration and Congress are moving quickly to respond to a growing political firestorm over allegations of treatment delays and falsified records at veterans hospitals nationwide.

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## Conn. Exhibit Looks at Benedict Arnold as Hero

A new exhibit on display at the Slater Memorial Museum is the latest effort to bring heightened visibility to a subject Norwich has deliberately ignored for centuries.

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## Testing Inconclusive, Suspected Bobcat Returned

A judge has returned a 38-pound feline to a New Jersey woman after DNA testing couldn't conclusively say whether it was a purebred bobcat.

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## Clearing This Afternoon with Sunshine for Sunday

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## Nissan's Taxi of Tomorrow Hoping for a Fare Future

Members of the New England Motor Press Association had the dual experiences



of driving and riding in this Taxi of Tomorrow when Nissan brought a pair of the hackney versions of its NV200 van to town.

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## Teen's Arm Reattached After Pasta Accident

Four surgeries later, 17-year-old Brett Bouchard can move his arm after it was severed below the elbow.

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## Red Sox Fall to Tigers, 1-0, Back Under .500

The loss drops the Sox back below .500, at 20-21, and 10-12 at home.

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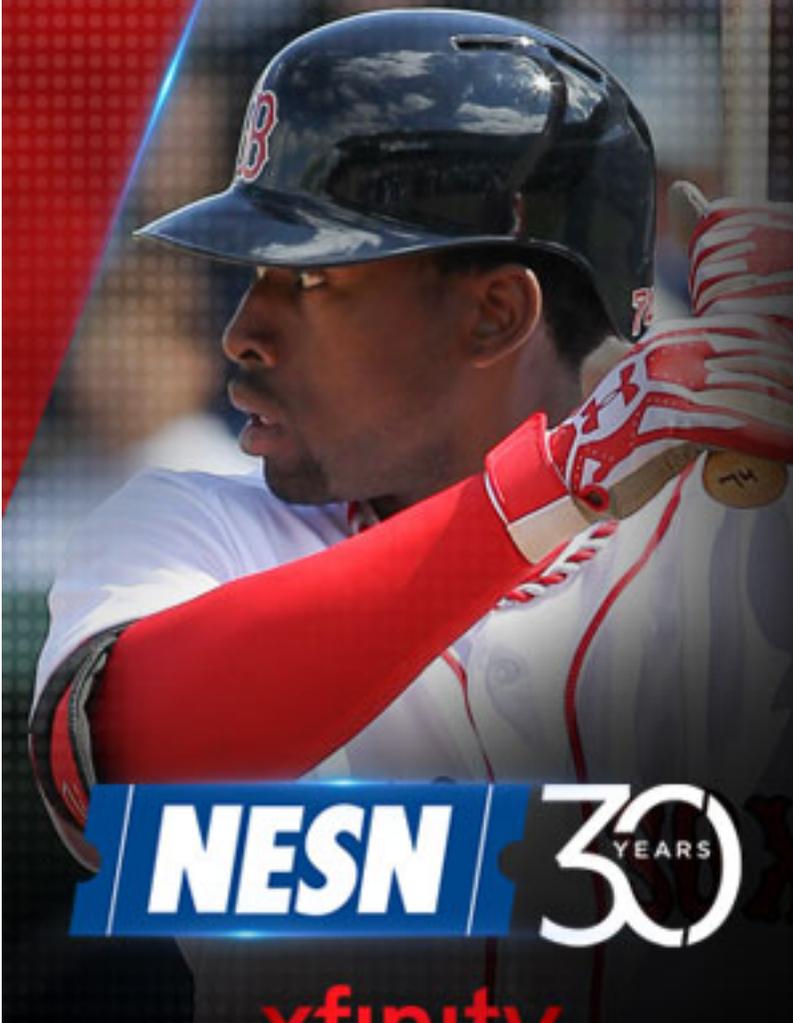


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