



Gooseberry Parent: YUBO

What is Yubo?

A free, social networking mobile app (formerly known as Yellow) developed and operated by Paris-based Twelve App SAS. It is used for making new friends and chatting individually or in groups through instant messaging or live video sharing.

Yubo has a minimum age of 13 and has a dedicated community for 13-17 year olds. It is free to download from the App Store and Google Play but also offers additional paid services to increase visibility on the app or to gain additional features.

Key Features of Yubo

Swipe: The swipe action is used to either “like” another profile picture (right swipe) or to “pass” (left swipe). If a user receives a ‘like’ back from someone they have “liked”, they are able to connect. The website says that they are considering removing the Swipe function as they are “uncomfortable with comparisons to Tinder.”

Chat: Users can communicate on an individual basis or in group chats. They use instant messaging and during the chat they may opt to use live video stream so that they can be seen.

Live: If users live stream, their broadcast can be seen by anyone on Yubo (not just those they have swiped right) and anyone will be able to send messages back. The person streaming the video can add viewers as new friends if they wish.

What else should I know?

SIGN-UP

- On sign-up users must be over 13 and they are requested to provide their real date of birth. At present the app does not have age-verification systems in place and so relies on honesty but if Yubo suspect a user’s age is fake they may ask for proof.
- By signing up, under 18’s are confirming that they have parental permission.
- 13-17 year olds are allocated to a separate Yubo community that is only for under-18s.
- Users must provide their real name, gender, location, a real photo that shows their face. They can also include other photos or videos in their profile.
- Users must provide a real mobile phone number, but this is not published in a user profile.
- By default, a user’s location, as shown by their mobile phone, will be visible in their profile. If someone doesn’t want their location to be visible to others, they need to switch off location data in their phone’s settings or hide their city in the Profile Settings on Yubo. If they do this, only their country will be visible in their profile.

PROFILE SETTINGS

Using the gear icon in their profile, users can:

- select whether to speak to Girls, Boys or both.
- Hide their location
- Choose not to allow friends to be able to use their mobile number to find them on the app.
- Adjust the distance settings on their profile to meet friends within a certain radius, either staying local or going global.
- Unfriend users they no longer want contact with.



COMMUNITY RULES

- Users are required to sign up to the rules. These encourage respect and kindness.
- The rules ban threats, nudes, bullying and spam, criminal behaviour and discriminatory behaviour. They ban fake photos, fake birthdates and impersonating others. In terms of images, the rules ban explicit images including underwear or indoor bikini or swimwear shots. They also ban violence, gore, drugs, advertising or using images of others without their permission. It bans promotion of eating disorders or self-harm.
- The website provides online guides for parents and teens which flag up some of the risks and gives advice on how to stay safe.

MODERATION

- Yubo uses human moderators to check the content created by users and follow up on reports received.
- It uses real-time intervention by human moderators to educate users about online safety. For example, a safety advice pop-up appears when someone enters a live stream.
- Yubo sends notifications community guidelines are broken, giving a caution and explaining what action they will take. This could be removing offending content, suspending or terminating the account and reporting to law enforcement agencies.

TECHNICAL TOOLS are used to:

- filter out profile photos that don't show the user's face
- identify and respond to under-age applicants.
- detect fake photos that have been stolen from the Web.
- detect and remove content that breaks the community rules
- Monitor banned profiles, banned titles and Live rooms that have been closed because of bad behaviour to ensure they are not reinstated.

BLOCKING AND REPORTING

- There is a report feature in the app (the flag icon) to report any suspicious, inappropriate and illegal activity. Reports can also be made via the Help pages on the website.
- Within the report function there is an option to Block and also to identify the details of the problem.

PERSONAL DATA

- The app collects and stores personal information including name, date of birth, phone number, gender, location and photos.
- Yubo says that it does not share user data with advertisers but see bullet points below which show content could be used for promoting Yubo.

TERMS OF USE

- The Terms of Use state that Yubo may use any content, user name, your voice, and/or your image as shown in that content for the purposes of services relating to the YUBO App.
- Users are deemed to have consented to any content generated within the App (in particular within the Live Chat service) which users may have broadcast publicly through a third-party to be used for the promotion of the YUBO App on Social Networking sites on which the content has previously been broadcast by them.
- When you make live video from your user profile, you have the ability to view and share live YouTube video. Search suggestions and the YouTube search bar are accessible directly from the YUBO App.
- Yubo recommend that you read the YouTube Terms of Service to learn more about the policies that apply when using this platform, as well as the Google Privacy Policy with regard to the processing of personal data.

LINKED ACCOUNTS

- Users can follow each other on SnapChat and Instagram



What are the risks?

The greatest risk is that live streaming is visible to everyone on the app, not just friends and that anyone viewing it can make contact with the user.

- **Signing Up:** Age is not independently verified and relies upon honesty.
- **Personal Details:** Real name and photo are required. (Yubo say they believe this helps to build a safer community). Other users can see your first name, age and profile photos.
- **Location:** The default setting reveals location and users must take positive steps to prevent location being revealed. Most users will likely be interested in meeting friends near them so you might struggle to get your teen to agree to disable the location settings.
- **Biography:** It can be tempting to provide appealing information about yourself in order to find like-minded friends, but this can risk revealing personal information.
- **Contact:** The whole concept of this App is to meet people you don't know in real life. Not all profiles will be genuine, and children should be aware that people may not be who they say they are.
- **Connecting** with strangers, particularly via live streaming, carries obvious risks despite being in a restricted age group community. The age gap between 13 and 17 year olds is big enough to cause issues in itself.
- **Conduct:** Live Streaming happens in real time, so it is difficult to moderate. Users risk being exposed to inappropriate or bullying conduct by others. They can also be at risk of making poor decisions about the way they behave themselves, particularly if subjected to peer pressure.
- **Live stream** content is out of your control. It can be seen by a wide audience and can be commented on, recorded and shared in ways that could damage a child's reputation, impacting them now and in the future. Background information or items such as school uniform can sometimes reveal someone's location too.
- **Content:** Although it is against the community rules, users may be exposed to illegal, discriminatory or other inappropriate content.
- **Wellbeing:** This app encourages children to judge others on their appearance. This can lead to an unhealthy obsession with looks, filters and the number of "likes". If a child likes a lot of other users but does not get liked back it could damage their self-esteem.
- **Screen Time:** Young children may find it hard to resist responding to people who like their profile. If they receive a lot of contact on the App they could find themselves spending longer online than is healthy.
- **Reviews:** Have a look yourself. There are a number of critical reviews on the app store.
- **Money:** Although free to download the app encourages in-app upgrades.
- **Linking to other online accounts** – This increases the risk of revealing personal information, including location, which could be useful to predators. Avoid linking accounts to help manage what is posted and where.

What should parents do?

- **Having read the information above**, if you think this app is suitable for your child, why not take one further step - **Download and use the app** – Having a go yourself can help you understand how the app works, the potential risks and how to make the account as secure as possible.
- **Read the parent and teen advice** with your child. Talk about the risks, including the particular risks of live streaming.
- **Explain** the community rules.
- **Make sure** your child knows how to report any problems and encourage them to tell you if they come across anything that upsets them.
- **Assure them** that you will be there to help, even if they make a mistake.

**Remember the World Wide Web should be a fun and liberating place for all –
take the right steps to make it a safe one**