



# **Snapchat Spectacles - The Newest Threat To Data Security And Privacy In The Workplace**

Insights

9.30.16

Last Friday, Snapchat (which recently changed its name to Snap, Inc.) announced the coming release of its newest product: “Spectacles” - brightly colored, fun-looking sunglasses with a built-in camera that records videos in 10-second increments (which can be combined to form a video of up to 30-seconds in length) with the touch of a button. The videos can be stored in the sunglasses until a later time or uploaded to the user’s phone for immediate sharing with friends. The glasses are expected to retail for \$130 which is only about one-tenth the price of the virtually defunct Google Glass, making Spectacles a product likely to be much more accessible to the average employee. Why does this matter to employers? Because it’s the latest challenge to companies striving to implement more secure data protection and privacy protocols in the workplace.

Employers have realized that in addition to the threat of a cyber-attack from hackers, a company’s own employees may provide, intentionally or unintentionally, the biggest threat to the security of sensitive data. This so-called “insider threat” has led companies to provide employee training on the handling and storage of sensitive data and guidance on how to avoid phishing scams which can trick unsuspecting employees into giving away passwords, social security numbers or other sensitive information. Companies have also established best practices for employee use of technology, such as setting a computer to activate a password protected screen saver after a short period (i.e., 3 minutes) of inactivity, disabling automatic log-in and ensuring that computer screens are not visible to outsiders through doors or windows.

Even with all of these protective measures, imagine the exposure of confidential information which could occur from having employees or even authorized guests walking around the office or cubicle area wearing Snapchat’s new Spectacles! The video-camera boasts a 115-degree field of view, designed to closely approximate how humans see. Employees filming a co-worker’s birthday celebration or just clowning around may inadvertently capture sensitive data on a user’s computer screen or files laying on a desk. The camera, of course, may also be used to capture unwelcome or inappropriate images of co-workers. The speed with which the videos can be uploaded and shared over the internet – becoming virtually irretrievable – is indeed cause for concern.

While the use of smart phones in the workplace, most of which have video capability, already presents certain challenges, the ability of those using wearable cameras “hidden” in sunglasses and the ease with which the information can be shared magnifies those challenges. It remains to be

seen whether these new Spectacles will catch-on, but even if these do not, wearable technology is on the rise and employers need to be vigilant about updating their policies and practices to keep up with the pace of these developments.