

Instagram introduces teen privacy settings amid safety concerns

Article

The news: Meta is rolling out a “teen accounts” feature on Instagram that automatically makes accounts private for all users younger than 18.

- The teen account setting includes privacy options to limit who can message, tag, or mention them without parent or guardian approval and **an option to turn off users’ account access at**

night.

- It will also have features like daily time limit prompts, giving parents further control over their teens' engagement with the platform.
- Teen accounts can automatically filter offensive language from comments and messages and limit exposure to content marked as sensitive.

How it works: Meta will use advanced age-verification technologies, including AI tools and government ID checks, to ensure teens cannot easily bypass the safety features or create adult accounts.

Users 16 or older can make their profiles public, while those younger than 16 need permission from a parent or guardian to do so.

Zooming out: Teen safety is very much in the news these days, and social media companies are under considerable pressure to address [how they protect young users from harmful content](#) and potentially addictive algorithms.

- In July, the **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** [banned users younger than 18](#) from the anonymous messaging app **NGL**—the first time it has restricted minors from a digital platform over data privacy concerns.
- [Florida will ban anyone younger than 14](#) from having a social media account starting next year, with the onus of compliance placed on platform owners.

Why it matters: Younger users represent a critical demographic for advertisers, and sensitive content filters aren't perfect.

- A federal judge recently [blocked parts of Texas' SCOPE law](#), citing concerns that its unclear definitions of harmful content might suppress free speech.
- If Meta's content filters are too vague, advertising campaigns that involve potentially sensitive material—like mental health issues—could be erroneously blocked for Gen Zers.

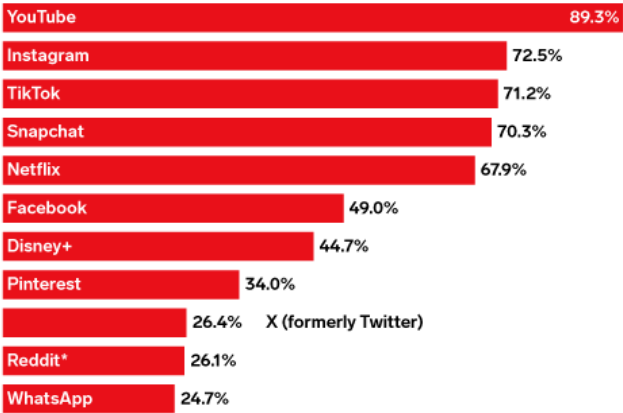
Meta is also competing with **TikTok** for Gen Z users, and the race is tight: [72.5% of Gen Zers use Instagram](#) at least once a month, compared with 71.5% for TikTok.

Our take: If Instagram can maintain a connection with younger users today, it can potentially monetize them in the future as they grow into more active consumers.

Meta is riding a delicate line between boosting safety measures to avoid further legal scrutiny and keeping young users on Instagram, not leaving for competitors with more lax policies, like TikTok and X (formerly Twitter).

Penetration of Select Digital Platforms Among US Gen Z, 2024

% of population



*Note: internet users born between 1997 and 2012 who access their account on the referenced social network via any device or watch Disney+, Netflix, or YouTube via app or website at least once per month; Disney+, Netflix, and YouTube forecast from Feb 2024; Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Reddit, Snapchat, TikTok, and X forecast from May 2024; *logged-in users*
Source: EMARKETER Forecast, June 2024