

Social media is a lifeline, but Gen Zers do desire occasional breaks

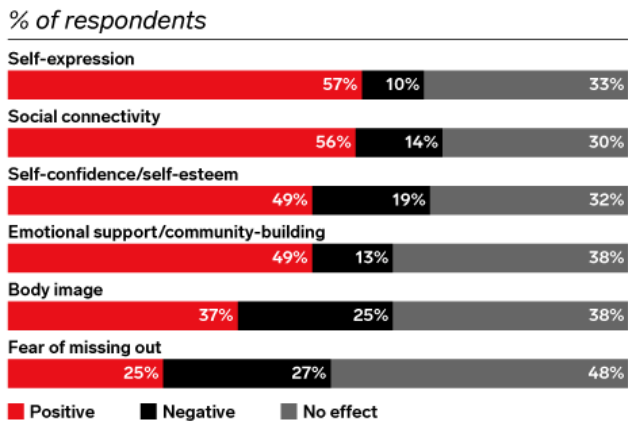
Article

- **TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat are where Gen Zers spend most of their daily time.** Across the US population ages 18 to 24, time spent on TikTok will average 58 minutes per day in 2023, compared with 38 minutes for Instagram and 30 minutes for Snapchat.
- **Instagram will surpass TikTok in penetration in 2024.** The Meta platform will narrowly overtake TikTok next year, with the number of Gen Z users continuing to grow through 2027.

While we expect TikTok’s growth to slow down within that period, it will still be the most heavily used platform among the US population ages 18 to 24 next year, based on time spent (nearly an hour a day to Instagram’s 40 minutes).

- **Social media is their main source of information.** Over three-quarters (77%) of US adult Gen Z internet users (ages 18 to 25) get their breaking news primarily from social media—more than any other generation, per a March 2023 survey from Kagan, a media research group within S&P Global Market Intelligence. Online platforms like TikTok, Reddit, and Twitter not only provide the news itself, but they also have built-in spaces for conversation and make it easy to share stories.

Impact of Social Media on Aspects of Their Lives According to Gen Z Social Media Users Worldwide, Nov 2022



Note: n=16,824 (mostly 18- to 24-year-olds and including a negligible minority of 13- to 17-year-old non-European respondents)
 Source: McKinsey Health Institute, “Global Gen Z Survey” as cited in company blog; Insider Intelligence calculations, April 28, 2023

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- **The positives outweigh the negatives.** Most Gen Z social media users worldwide believe the channel has a positive impact on social connectivity, community-building, and self-expression, according to a November 2022 survey from McKinsey Health Institute. However, in terms of FOMO (“fear of missing out”) and body image—both of which can trigger anxiety through constant comparison—more respondents reported social media having a negative impact.
- **They're not opposed to advertising on social media.** A higher percentage of US adult Gen Z respondents were receptive to social media advertising (72%) compared with ads on streaming TV (47%), cable TV (28%), or broadcast TV (20%), per a February 2023 NCSolutions survey.

- **They occasionally unplug.** US adult Gen Zers (ages 18 to 24) are the most likely of the generations to take a break from social media, but those breaks are more likely to be shorter (less than a week) compared with those taken by millennials (ages 25 to 34) or Gen Xers (ages 35 to 54), according to a June 2023 CivicScience survey. The shorter duration is likely tied to how social media has been woven into their daily lives, making it difficult to function efficiently without it.
- **What does this mean?** Social media is multidimensional for Gen Z: It's a first line of communication for breaking news, a tool for maintaining relationships, and a place to discover new ideas and interests. But constant connectivity can be overwhelming, so the generation is also interested in taking breaks—or, at least, finding a better balance between their digital and physical lives.

Report by Paola Flores-Marquez Sep 21, 2023

Gen Z Technology and Media Preferences

