

Is the social (media) experiment over? Definitely not—but it's shifting

Article

Last month, Atlantic writer Ian Bogost posed the **incendiary question**, “Is the age of social media ending?” No, according to our analysts. But it’s definitely changing, which presents an

opportunity to reach younger consumers.

As social networking of the 2010s (think Facebook) gives way to social media and entertainment (think TikTok), the entire social ecosystem of the internet is changing. But “it’s always changing,” noted our analyst Debra Aho Williamson on our “**Behind the Numbers: The Daily**” podcast, adding that social media’s constant evolution is a “really exciting and bright” aspect.

Gen Z isn’t leaving social media—they’re moving toward more interaction.

“They want to use social media to be informed and entertained, but they also want to have interactions and engagements with their friends,” said Williamson. “I think they’re going to be using platforms in multiple different ways and [with] multiple different types of platforms to meet all of those needs.”

“We have these apps that are aimed at young people, BeReal being one of the most common examples, but there are others,” said Williamson. “They’re all more focused on this authentic communication in small groups, which to me sounds a whole heck of a lot like the way Facebook started.”

So what’s “over”?

- Williamson said Bogost is “laying out the transition from social networking.” Digital interactions with in-person friends have given way to social media, “which is much more about broadcasting information, viewpoints, thoughts, videos, and people consuming those.”
- Social media is not a series of ending chapters, but a “continuum,” according to Williamson, who called the current era “a fluid change from one type of communication and interaction and engagement to another, with hints of the previous one.”

The feeling of a social media shift can in many ways be attributed to a shift toward digital relationships, rather than physical, noted our analyst Jasmine Enberg, who confirmed that connections remain “important to social media, social entertainment, content creation, and consumption.”

- Teen and young adult behaviors are what drive change in communication and social media, according to Williamson.
- And by that logic, social media isn’t going anywhere, because teens and young adults “don’t know a world without social media,” Enberg observed.

Listen to the full podcast.

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